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ABSTRACT

This handbook was developed by Project 10, an on-campus counseling program within the Los Angeles (California) Unified School District. The handbook covers many of the issues and problems that arise for homosexual high school students. Introductory material includes a history of the informal beginnings of Project 10. The first chapter describes the structure and inception of Project 10 and its founder, Virginia Uribe. Chapter 2 is an overview of the clinical and historical approaches to homosexuality by Robert J. Bidwell. Chapter 3 treats homosexual teen suicide. Chapter 4 explores gay and lesbian adolescents and their families. Chapter 5 examines health issues for gay and lesbian adolescents and their families. Chapter 6 covers minority issues. Chapter 7 reviews strategies for counseling and intervention with lesbian and gay adolescents. Chapter 8 explains how to start a Project 10 support system in other schools. Chapter 9 is an essay on homophobia by Virginia Uribe. Chapter 10 includes two model lesson plans on gay and lesbian awareness and an action plan to target name-calling in the classroom. The following are appended: (1) a list of books for a library on homosexual issues; (2) a teacher's self-evaluation on non-biased behavior; (3) a list of strategies for managing homophobia in schools; (4) a list of strategies for dealing with opposition; and (5) an article on Project 10 from the "Los Angeles Times". Several of the chapters include references. (JB)

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PROJECT 10

HANDBOOK

ADDRESSING LESBIAN AND GAY ISSUES IN OUR SCHOOLS

A RESOURCE DIRECTORY FOR TEACHERS, GUIDANCE COUNSELORS, PARENTS AND SCHOOL-BASED ADOLESCENT CARE PROVIDERS

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NEA RESOLUTION

Resolution adopted by the NEA on July 7, 1988 a NEA convention, New Orleans:

C-11. Student Sexual Orientation.

The National Education Association believes that all persons, regardless of sexual orientation should be afforded equal opportunity within the public education system. The Association further believes that every school district should provide counseling for students who are struggling with their sexual/gender orientation.

BOARD RESOLUTION REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO RESPECTFUL TREATMENT OF ALL PERSONS

"The Los Angeles Unified School District reaffirms its policy that students and adults in both schools and offices should treat all persons equally and respectfully and refrain from the willful or negligent use of slurs against any person on the basis of race, language spoken, color, sex, religion, handicap, national origin, immigration status, age, sexual orientation, or political belief..."

Excerpted from a resolution unanimously passed by the Board of Education, October, 10, 1988.

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PROJECT 10

HANDBOOK

ADDRESSING LESBIAN AND GAY ISSUES IN OUR SCHOOLS

A RESOURCE DIRECTORY FOR TEACHERS, GUIDANCE COUNSELORS, PARENTS AND SCHOOL-BASED ADOLESCENT CARE PROVIDERS

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Gregory Thomas Cartwright

Graduate, Fairfax High

Class of 1988

GREGORY THOMAS CARTWRIGHT

Fairfax High School
Graduation Speech
June 22, 1988

I feel truly sad today that I'm leaving a place that I've grown to love so much--a place where I feel so at peace with myself.

As other minority groups have struggled to have their voices heard, I too have engaged in a struggle. My struggle was to find a place for myself in the high school experience. Being associated with PROJECT 10 has given me the chance to articulate the needs of the silent minority. I feel personal growth in the sense that I no longer consider myself stigmatized or different from other students. For this, I thank the Los Angeles Unified School District and Fairfax High School. This experience has given me the same affirmation and future opportunities that all students receive. From feelings of hopelessness when I came to Fairfax, I now feel good about myself and look forward to a happy and successful future.

Fairfax High has been a major growing experience, not only for me, but also for my fellow classmates. It has become the nurturing spot for all of us, in the acceptance of the many racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds with which we might never have become familiar. We have interacted with a wide variety of people that we may never have had the opportunity to understand....

For all these growing experiences, we owe thanks to many....

You have all played a part in my personal growth. Your support has given me confidence and security. I know one thing for sure--if I had not come to Fairfax High School, I would not be graduating today.

Thank you.....

PREFACE

Introduction

In recent years there has been an unprecedented interest in the subject of adult homosexuality. This is in part due to the increasing visibility of the "gay rights" movement in the United States and to the public health issues surrounding the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) epidemic. Despite the constant flow of information on radio and television, in books, periodicals and daily newspapers, little attention is given to childhood and adolescent homosexuality. The paucity of literature in this area supports the view that, as a nation, the United States is unwilling to accept any departure from heterosexuality in its young people.

This blindness to variation of human sexuality is evident in the traditional social structures of family, church and school. Because we are entrusted with the education of our young, it is perhaps expecially startling that the schools treat as invisible the existence of their homosexual children. Cultural "taboos," fear of controversy and deeply-rooted, pervasive homophobia (an irrational fear of homosexuality) have kept the educational system in the United States blindfolded and mute on the subject. One can only speculate on the enormous losses among our young people because of this indifference.

Discrimination not only harms lesbian and gay children, but also hinders the development of heterosexual children and obstructs the functions of education for society as a whole. Acceptance of prejudice against gay students bolsters the authority of priviledged groups, and legitimizes discrimination against any child who is a member of a racial, ethnic or religious minority. It reinforces rigid sex role behavior, and thereby restricts each child's creativity and personal growth. So long as calling a boy a "faggot" can deter him from displaying sensitivity and calling a girl "dyke" can keep her from showing strength, all students are hurt and inhibited by homophobia.

Finally, prejudice keeps all students ignorant. Refusal to speak about homosexuality except in negative terms denies students accurate information about sexuality and fosters misinformation. This in turn encourages intolerance and increasing violence against homosexuals.

The Process of Stigmatization

It is the basic assumption of this program that homosexuality is a normal variation in both sexual orientation and sexual bahavior. Negative attitudes toward homosexuals are primarily the result of homophobia, a prejudice similar in nature and dynamic to all other prejudices including anti-semetism, racism, and sexism. Continued exposure to societal prejudice results in a stigmatization of the homosexuality oriented through which their social and personal identities are, to use Goffman's (1963) term, "spoiled." As a result, gay people become members of a

minority group, a term defined by Allport (1958) as any segment of the population that suffers unjustified negative acts by the rest of society.

Most lesbian and gay adolescents are not willing to risk the ridicule and harassment that accompanies being open about their sexuality and opt for concealment and hiding. The rewards for being normal are so great that those who can pass will.

For those children who reveal their sexuality, public school often means ridicule from teachers and fellow students, verbal and physical abuse from those around them, and other homophobic practices which undermine their ability to learn and frequently cause them to drop out of school altogether.

The Story of Chris

PROJECT 10 began in November, 1984, as the result of an unpleasant incident that took place at Fairfax High School in the Los Angeles Unified School District. The school is located two blocks south of the city of West Hollywood along Melrose Avenue, a street of "New Wave" and "punk" specialty shops. It has a student body of approximately 2500 students of mixed racial and ethnic background. Although West Hollywood is almost adjacent to the school, and has a large gay population, Fairfax High School students are neither more nor less sensitive to the issues of homosexuality than students from other schools in the western part of Los Angeles.

The incident involved an openly gay male student who had been transferred to Fairfax from another school. From the day he entered, he was physically abused by peers, and verbally abused by teachers and peers alike. Finally, he dropped out of school entirely and turned to the streets, becoming one more casualty of a system that neither understood nor cared about him. His rejection was a systematic repeat of his experiences at four other schools.

This offensive incident prompted an investigation into the school history and background of Chris H., Age 17, Black, male homosexual. Two counselors, seven former teachers and the head of a group home where he lived were located. Chris had been forcibly ejected from his home at age 14 for admitting that he was gay and had been on the streets for about a year until he was placed in a juvenile detention home and finally a group residential home for lesbian and gay adolescents. All his former teachers and counsleors described him as "sweet," "nice," and of average intelligence with no particular learning disabilities. The only reason given as to why he encountered so much trouble in school was that he was gay. The story was always the same. He would enter a school, and the students would begin harassing him immediately. If he defended himself, either verbally or physically, he was taken to the dean's office and reprimanded. The adults added to this by making innuendoes or other subtle remarks about his homosexuality.

Chris had been submitted to so much abuse at one school that there was a letter in his file, written by an administrator at the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center, registering a protest about an incident of "gay bashing" that had taken place at one campus. The response of the school was to transfer Chris out.

How It All Started

Some gay and lesbian students who attended Fairfax High School were invited to meet weekly at lunch time on an informal basis. Before long the group had grown to twenty-five or more "regulars." These early meetings were spent in rather unstructured "rap" sessions, discussing problems that were encountered in the school setting. The plight of Chris, whom many of them knew, was discussed along with the similarities his case bore to so many others. Although none of this was measured quantitatively, preliminary observations indicated that most of the students reflected societal attitudes of discrimination against them. Low self-esteem, feelings of isolation, alienation, and inadequacy were common. Although most in this early group were very intelligent, few were performing at a level consistent with their native capacity. Many were involved in self-destructive behavior, including substance abuse and attempted suicides, and were on the verge of dropping out of school. One of the most significant facts was their feeling that they existed in a box, with no adults to talk to, no traditional support structures to lean on for help in sorting out their problems, and no young people like themselves with whom to socialize. In effect, these young homosexuals perceived themselves to be stranded in an environment that shuned their very existence.

From these early group discussions, PROJECT 10 was born. The name, PROJECT 10, was given to the program as a way of representing that portion of the population considered by sociologists and psychologists as primarily reflecting a homosexual orientation.

This handbook has been prepared in order to compile what we have learned since the inception of the PROJECT 10 program and to pass this information on to you. Perhaps it can best be summarized in a quote by Erik Erickson:

> Some day, maybe, there will exist a well informed, well considered and yet fervent public conviction that the most deadly of all possible sins is the mutilation of a child's spirit.

Virginia Uribe, PhD
Founder, PROJECT 10

CHAPTER I

PROJECT 10 BACKGROUND

Lesbian and gay youth are an underserved minority within the educational system. Because their existence is less visible than those minorities based on skin color, national heritage or religion, they are often ignored. In addition, their status as a stigmatized group places them at considerable risk within the institutional homophobia of the educational system. A major study of the ten largest school districts in the United States, undertaken by Dr. Virginia Uribe in 1986, offered compelling evidence that lesbian/gay teenagers are treated as invisible or as objects of hate and bigotry within the schools. The net result of this unchallenged discrimination is that the dropout rate for lesbian/gay teenagers is disproportionately high in comparison to their statistical incidence in the general population.

PROJECT 10

PROJECT 10 is an on-campus counseling program organized in 1984 in response to the unmet needs of adolescent lesbian/gays in the educational system. Begun at Fairfax High School, a campus within the Los Angeles Unified School District, PROJECT 10 has become a model program for Los Angeles and other school districts. The focus of the model is education, reduction of verbal and physical abuse, suicide prevention and accurate AIDS information.

PROJECT 10 is committed to keeping students in school, off drugs and sexually responsible. Studies have long documented the correlation between low self-esteem and high risk behavior. Thus, PROJECT 10 attempts to improve self-esteem among lesbian/gay youth by providing accurate information and non-judgmental counseling on issues of sexual orientation. PROJECT 10 also is of benefit to the non-gay population in that the program furthers one of the missions of public education which is to teach children how to live peacefully in an increasingly diverse society.

PROJECT 10 is often characterized, incorrectly, as a lesbian/gay program. As a result, discussions of PROJECT 10 often become discussions of homosexuality. PROJECT 10 is best described as a dropout prevention program, and the methods involved in its implementation are much the same as other dropout prevention programs. The only difference is in the target group, lesbian/gay youth, a group that has been traditionally underserved by the educational system.

Services of PROJECT 10 include workshops and training sessions for administrators and staff personnel, informal drop-in counseling for students at Fairfax and other school sites, outreach to parents and significant others, liaison with peer counseling, substance abuse and suicide prevention programs, and coordination with health education programs that encourage sexual responsibility, and risk-reduction behavior among lesbian/gay and bisexual youth.

DR. VIRGINA URIBE
FOUNDER, PROJECT 10

Dr. Virginia Uribe is a veteran teacher and counselor for the Los Angeles Unified School District, having been at Fairfax High School since 1959. A gradudate of Immaculate Heart College (B.A.--1955, M.A.--1962), Dr. Uribe received a PhD in Psychology from Sierra University in 1988.

During research for her degree, Dr. Uribe became interested in the treatment of homosexual youth in the public education system. A pilot program targeted at this group was developed at Fairfax High School in the Los Angeles Unified School District. There was no precedent for such a program, and thus PROJECT 10 has become the model for other schools and other school districts. Its focus is education, reduction of verbal and physical harassment, and integration with other dropout prevention programs.

Since its inception in 1984, PROJECT 10 has affected the lives of thousands of lesbian/gay youth. Dr. Uribe has counseled 100's of young men and women. In addition to the students seen personally, she also receives daily phone calls from runaway or throwaway youths. Dr. Uribe speaks at schools throughout the Los Angeles Unified School District and at seminars which educate counselors, teachers and other school personnel on the subject of sexual orientation. She has provided hundreds of educators with information on different issues that contribute to the understanding of gay and lesbian youth.

In addition to schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District, other school districts and universities across the nation have requested information and guidance from Dr. Uribe. These include schools in San Francisco, Seattle, Washington, D.C., New Jersey, New York, Nebraska, Virginia, Oregon and Canada. Moreover, the National Education Association, the nation's largest teacher's organization, has called for the development of PROJECT 10--type programs across the nation. She has been honored by many organizations including the Commission on Sex Equity, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Los Angeles City Council, and the Los Angeles Board of Education.

Because this program is unique tc education there has been a great deal of publicity surrounding it. Dr. Uribe has been featured on national radio and television shows for her pioneering work in an area traditionally underserved by education.

CHAPTER 2

THE GAY AND LESBIAN TEEN: A CASE OF DENIED ADOLESCENCE

Robert J. Bidwell, MD

Classic pediatric thought has viewed homosexuality in adolescence as either a transient experimental phase on the path toward a mature heterosexuality or as a pathologically truncated form of development that might proceed into adulthood. In recent years there has been a growing awareness that for a certain number of youths, a gay or lesbian identity is a natural developmental outcome. (Martin, 1982; Remafedi, 1987; Remafedi and Blum, 1986; Rigg, 1982). With this awareness has come a recognition that growing up gay or lesbian is marked by its own special set of dangers and obstacles above and beyond the usual turmoil of adolescence. Nevertheless, aspects of old prejudices remain, even within the professional communities working with youth. However, at the same time, it is these very professionals who can play a role in facilitating a healthy transition from childhood to adulthood for the gay and lesbian adolescent.

BACKGROUND

Aspects of Sexual Identity

Sexual identity can be seen as having three facets (Green, 1974). The first, core morphologic identity, is that deep inner sense of being male or female. The second, gender role behavior, refers to behavior relative to the cultural expectations for those of the same gender. It is only in the third, sexual partner orientation, that gay or lesbian individuals necessarily differ from heterosexuals in that they are affectionally and sexually attracted to members of their own gender.

Origins

Several hypotheses regarding the origins of sexual orientation have been offered (Greydanus & Dewdney, 1985). Among them are explanations based on genetic, hormonal, psychological, and sociologic factors. Regardless of the specific antecedents of homosexuality, which may involve elements of both "nature and nurture," the roots of sexual identity are generally believed to be established during the latency period of childhood, well before adolescence (Green, 1974; Troiden, 1979). The process by which those roots give rise to meanings that are personalized and integrated into an individual's concept of self is lifelong and is marked by predictable developmental stages (Troiden, 1979, 1986).

Incidence

An accurate estimate of the number of gay and lesbian adolescents is unattainable. Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin (1948), in their classic study of sexuality in the 1930s and 1940s, found that 8% of men and 4% of women were predominantly or exclusively homosexual for at least three years between 16 and 55 years of age. Sixty percent of boys and 33% of girls had had a "homosexually stimulating experience" by 15 years of age. These researchers also presented the well-known "Kinsey Scale" that plots human sexual behavior across a spectrum from exclusively homosexual to exclusively heterosexual. Four percent of the population fell into the homosexual category and 50% into the heterosexual category, leaving 46% somewhere in between. Sorenson (1973) reported that 17% of men and 6% of women had had one or more homosexual experiences by age 19.

However, these studies, with others, reflect homosexual activity rather than orientation. Many heterosexual teens may engage in homosexual experimentation; the converse is also true. Furthermore, because of the strong internal and external proscription to the natural expression of their sexuality, it would not be unreasonable to expect that many gay and lesbian adolescents are not homosexually active during their teen years. If one accepts that approximately 10% of the population is (primarily) homosexual, then perhaps 2.9 million of the 29 million American adolescents are lesbian or gay.

Historical Perspective

Homosexuality has existed through the ages and across many cultures. At times it has been accepted as a natural part of the repertoire of human behavior. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, however, it has generally been seen as morally unacceptable, at times resulting in excommunication and even loss of life. Traditional religious beliefs continue to be reflected in the secular community. Homosexual expression is still illegal in 25 states where sodomy laws are in force (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 1987). Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is often practiced and condoned (Rivera, 1982). Furthermore, both the medical and psychiatric communities have long considered homosexuality to be either sick or perverted (Chilman, 1983).

In the 1960's, the advent of the gay and lesbian rights movement led to a more critical examination of long-held beliefs. Several churches have shown increasing tolerance and understanding in their ministries to gays and lesbians (Nelson, 1982). In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association (1980), amid much internal controversy, removed homosexuality per se from its list of mental disorders, declaring it simply another manifestation of sexual expression. Pediatric thought has experienced a similar transformation. In this decade the American Academy of Pediatrics (1983) published its report on reality of gay and lesbian adolescents and the responsibility of health professionals to recognize and address their special medical and developmental needs. Nevertheless, despite marked changes in attitude toward homosexuality

in certain sectors of society, the reality is that most gay and lesbian adolescents continue to grow up in an unfriendly environment.

THE EXPERIENCE

Developmental Tasks

Adolescence, regardless of sexual orientation, is a time of exploration and discovery that ideally results in the accomplishment of certain developmental tasks (Hammar, 1982). These include the establishment of a stable identity and enhanced self-esteem, adaptation to an adult sexual role, emancipation from the family, and the formulation of career or vocational goals.

Only those who have passed through a gay or lesbian adolescence can fully understand the unique experience of those teens who must slowly come to terms with their homosexuality--the confusion and pain as well as the strength that derives from being a survivor in a largely hostile environment (Martin, 1982). Many of those rights of passage through which other teens pass are not open to the gay and lesbian adolescent. The glances and shy smiles exchanged across a classroom, the sending of a valentine, the agony of the first telephone call asking for a date, the shared bag of popcorn in a movie theatre and the walk home on a moonlit night with arms about one another, the first kiss and touch--all these are simply not realities for most gay and lesbian teens or are experienced heterosexually with a sense of falseness and confusion.

Above all else, growing up gay or lesbian is living daily with a terrible secret that no one must ever know. There is an ever-present fear of being found out or exposed. Gay adolescents must be ever on guard so that should a conversation turn suddenly to homosexuality or a friend or parent launch into a "queer joke," they are not given away by a quivering in their voice or fear in their eyes.

There is also an overwhelming sense of loneliness and isolation (Martin, 1982). For heterosexual youths, positive role models everywhere affirm the normality of their sexual urges and expression. Gay youths are acculturated through the same set of models. Although positive gay and lesbian role models abound, they are almost completely inaccessible to these teens. Instead, this important inner truth is either ignored completely, passed off as a phase, or viewed negatively. Because these negative messages often come from those who are most loved and trusted, they are internalized and lead to a sense of guilt and self-contempt.

Furthermore, for most gay teens there is no trusted friend in whom to confide, nor are there healthy outlets for the first steps in sexual exploration. Because of the barriers to the healthy expression of their sexuality, these first steps often lead to "the baths, bars, or bushes." Here anonymity provides a false sense of safety but does little to promote genuine intimacy, commitment, and self-esteem.

Deisher (1972) and Remafedi (1987) have documented the physical and emotional turmoil experienced by many gay male adolescents. The experience of the lesbian is less well documented but might be presumed to be similar. Substance abuse, runaway behavior, poor school performance, peer and family conflict, depression, and attempted suicide are among the predictable consequences of rejection, isolation, and low self-esteem. Further studies documenting the complications of growing up gay and lesbian in our society are needed.

Adaptations

Sexual identity is not a matter of choice. However, gay and lesbian teens can choose how they will respond to their inner reality. Many repress or suppress their sexual selves. Often they will channel their attention and energy into other pursuits such as athletics, scholastics, or the arts; many will eventually marry and raise families. Some, with maturity, come to accept a gay or lesbian identity whereas others will carry their "awful secret" with them for a lifetime.

A minority of gay and lesbian adolescents will "come out," admitting their homosexuality, or are exposed involuntarily. These teens face the real possibilities of rejection by families and friends as well as physical and emotional abuse (Remafedi, 1987). Many are thrown out of their homes or become runaways. Society has few safety nets for these homeless youths who are often forced by circumstances into theft, drug dealing, or prositution to survive on the streets.

A final choice for some teens, unable to tolerate the pain of either remaining "in the closet" or "coming out," is suicide. Roesler and Deisher (1972) and Remafedi (1987) found that more than one-third of the gay and bisexual adolescents in their studies had attempted suicide.

In essence, gay and lesbian teens are denied not only their sexuality, but their adolescence as well. Unable to freely admit or express one of the most important parts of their being, they are prevented from accomplishing the expected developmental tasks of adolescence (Malyon, 1981). The gradual discovery of who one is and how one relates to others requires extensive social interaction and experimentation. For most gay teens this is simply impossible.

Working With Adolescents

It is not the role of the health professional to define an adolescent's sexual orientation. Instead, the professional can facilitate each teen's development by providing accurate information and nonjudgemental counseling.

Once adolescents have acknowledged a gay or lesbian identity or have expressed concerns about sexual orientation, various areas (may) be explored. It is important, first of all, to explore the source of their concern. Some might conclude that occasional homosexual feelings or experiences necessarily mean that they are lesbian or gay. Care should be taken to avoid facile reassurance and the urge to label. It is also important to determine what types of conflicts,

internal and external, have arisen from perceiving themselves or being perceived by others as lesbian or gay.

With increasing trust and rapport, one should explore the exact nature of the teen's sexual expression, including types and frequencies of sexual practices, number of partners, and the concomitant use of drugs and alcohol.

It is rare for the gay or lesbian adolescent to have access to accurate and unbiased information about homosexuality and gay lifestyles. The myths surrounding homosexuality abound and continue to have a powerful influence on both popular and professional thought. Adolescents, both gay and lesbian, accept many of these myths as fact. To prevent or repair damaged self-esteem, these misconceptions must be corrected. Gay teens must know, first of all, that their sexual orientation is not a choice. Nor is it a contagion. Nor is it the product of some developmental interruption or flaw. Rather, their feelings are a completely valid and natural representation of the human experience. They are as likely as their heterosexual peers to lead happy, fulfilling, and productive lives once a personal peace has been made with their sexuality (Gonsiorek, 1982).

Gay and lesbian teens should be provided the positive role models they have been denied and that are present in every field of endeavor--the arts and sciences, religion, politics, and sports.

Supportive resources for gay and lesbian teens are meager, especially in less urban areas. Therefore an ongoing, trusting relationship with a (counselor) may be the only resource available for both teens and their parents. Local churches, schools, adolescent and mental health clinics, and gay support organizations may broaden the network of support in some communities. Some sponsor gay youth discussion groups that provide a healthy forum for guidance and peer social interaction.

Finally, the sexual and affectional feelings of gay and lesbian youth should be validated as natural and healthy. They deserve the same permission as other teens to explore and experiment to learn about their developing selves and to expand their capacities for sharing, intimacy and love.

Working With Parents

Parents confronted with the possibility of a son or daughter who might be gay are filled with an emotional tangle of confusion, guilt, anger, fear, revulsion, and grief. No amount of reassurance or education will immediately reduce this emotional reaction. Nevertheless, when counseling parents, misconceptions about the origins and nature of homosexuality and gay and lesbian lifestyles should be corrected. The urge for parents to label an adolescent or to seek psychotherapy to alter sexual orientation should be resisted. As mentioned earlier, many books and pamphlets are available to the concerned parent. Furthermore, in many communities

additional support is available through local chapters of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (a directory of local groups can be obtained from PFLAG, P.O. Box 24565, Los Angeles, CA 90024).

In The Community

Fundamental changes must take place in society's view of homosexuality to ensure that future generations of gay and lesbian adolescents do not experience continued barriers to development. Health care professionals can be leaders in this change by raising community consciousness to an awareness of the unmet needs of gay and lesbian youth and by helping put in place structures that will meet those needs. The traditional fears of addressing these issues must be abandoned. Although most gay and lesbian teens emerge from their adolescent years as survivors against great odds, too many lives have been stunted or lost for no other reason than society's failure to admit their existence and to protect and nurture their emerging identities.

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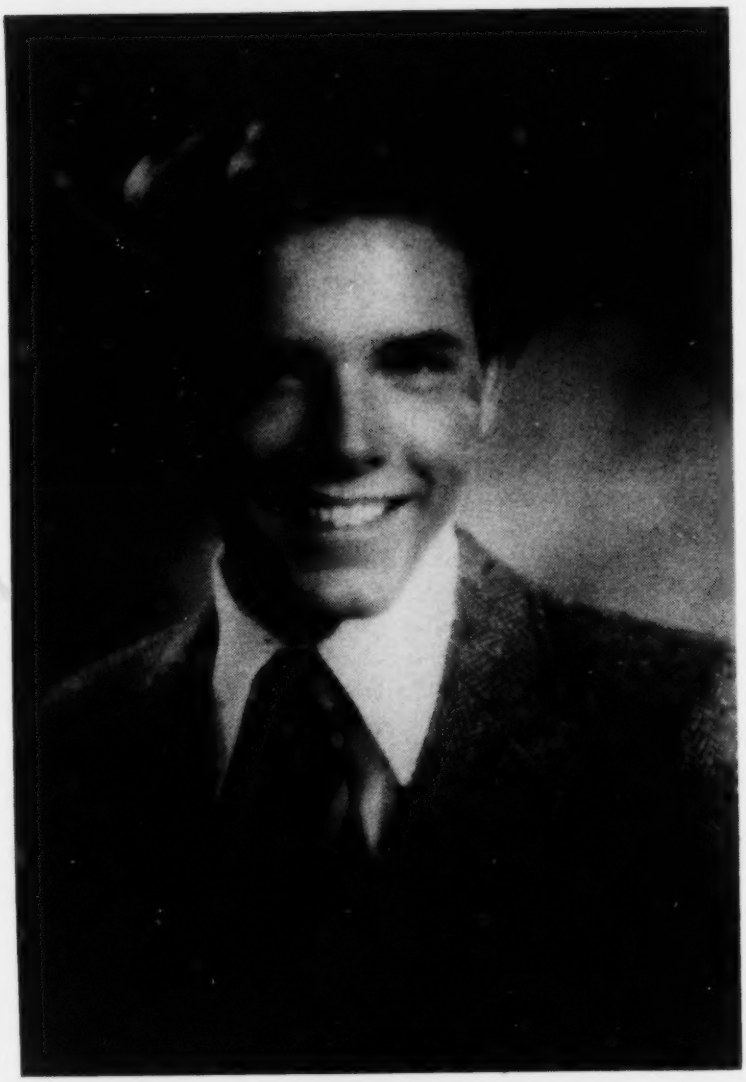
CHAPTER 3

DEADLY DESPAIR. . . LESBIAN AND GAY TEEN SUICIDE



BOBBY GRIFFTH
June 24, 1963--August 27, 1983

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He was fourteen years old. My mother was his math teacher at our high school in Staten Island, New York. She always said he was the nicest and the brightest. He never used drugs and he did not even smoke cigarettes. He got good grades and his family was highly respected in the community. The newspaper report said it was a hunting accident, that when the shotgun blew his head off it was a tragic accident. The parents supplied the information to the press. He was my friend's brother and he was gone. Years later the true story that the parents wanted to hide came to light. His lover had left him. He was gay in a world that could not be approached on the subject. His religious leader, his teachers, his high school guidance counselor, his best friends could not be approached on the subject, and certainly not his family. Who to talk to? Where to turn? Torn in strife on the inside and no where to go...no help. There was only one way out for this young man. He, privately, with a bang, ended his suffering.

Part of the testimony of Ira Zucker, delivered at a public hearing on PROJECT 10 held at the Los Angeles Board o Education, June 23, 1988.

A STATEMENT BY MARY A. GRIFFITH, MOTHER OF BOBBY GRIFFITH

"Because of my own lack of knowledge, I became dependent upon people in the clergy. When the clergy condemns a homosexual person to hell and eternal damnation, we the congregation echo 'amen.' When the clergy says 'a homosexual person is sick, perverted and a danger to our children,' we again echo 'amen.' I deeply regret my lack of knowledge concerning gay and lesbian people. Had I allowed myself to investigate what I now see as bible bigotry and diabolical dehumanizing slander against our fellow human beings, I would not be looking back with regret for having relinquished my ability to think and reason with other people...people I trusted for truth and guidance in my life and in the life of our gay son.

God did not heal or cure Bobby as he, our family, and clergy believed he should. It is obvious to us now why he did not. God has never been encumbered by his child's genetically-determined sexual orientation. God is pleased that Bobby had a kind and loving heart. In God's eyes, kindness and love are what life is about. I did not know that each time I echoed 'amen' to the eternal damnation, referring to Bobby as sick, perverted and a danger to our children that his self-esteem and personal worth were being destroyed. Finallly his spirit broke beyond repair, he could no longer rise above the injustice of it all. Bobby ended his life at age twenty.

It was not God's will that Bobby jumped over the side of a freeway overpass into the path of an eighteen-wheel truck, killing him instantly. Bobby's death was the direct result of his parent's ignorance and fear of the word gay.

An injustice has been done not only to Bobby but to his family as well. God knows it isn't right that Bobby is not here with his loved ones. Correct education about homosexuality would have prevented this tragedy. There are no words to express the pain and emptiness remaining in the hearts of Bobby's family members, relatives and friends. We miss his kind and gently ways, his fun-loving spirit, his laughter. Bobby's hopes and dreams should not have been taken from him, but they were. We can't have Bobby back. Please don't let this happen again."

Testimony presented at a public hearing on PROJECT 10, June 23, 1988

THE PINK TRIANGLE

I am a young man attending _____ High School. I, like many others in this school, have been in love and have experienced different emotions, whether they are good or bad. Like many of you, at a tender young age, I was hassling with life in an alcoholic family. I, while all you others were playing outside swinging in the swings and playing at the parks, I was home taking putdowns insults and many other things that were crude to tell a young kid. Life was very horrible for a child at that age.

First, I was struggling with my family life -- then the problem with sexuality kicked in. I always thought that I was normal -- that my attraction to men was no novelty. My parents started pressuring me into liking girls and having crushes on little girls. By the time I was in elementary school every single kid had supposedly a girlfriend or had at least kissed a girl. But I never did get to kiss a girl. All through elementary school I never really put too much thought to the fact that I was a little bit different. All the things seemed very pessimistic in my eyes.

My junior high years came up, and while all the other boys were bragging about how many girls they had had sex with, I would just listen and wonder why I wasn't doing the things every other guy was doing. In the eighth grade I fell in love with my first boyfriend. We spent beautiful times together. I thought love was beautiful even though the love was coming from two boys. It was all lovely until one day when we were walking down the street and these three guys jumped behind a gay couple and started beating on them and screaming "faggots", "Queer" and a lot of other names. Me and my boyfriend went to help them fight. My boyfriend pushed me aside and started fighting against the three guys. There was alot of blood -- the scene was horrid. That's when I realized that our love wasn't as beautiful to other people as it was to me and my boyfriend.

I got to high school and I was getting isolated. I got distant from my friends. I somehow thought that they wouldn't understand my situation. I was really depressed for awhile. I started meeting my friends that to me seemed more open minded. When I got close enough to my friends I told them I was gay. Some accepted me but some tore apart from me and they would talk bad about me behind my back. But friends like that are worth losing.

I started getting myself together. Now I'm a junior at _____ High School and I've never felt better about myself. Now I'm emotionally strong and I think I've been through more or less good and bad situations so I could make the right decisions in life. Now I've experienced different kinds of prejudice and I've experienced different kinds of hate. Now I learn to ignore the rude comments that people say. We are like anyone that is alive. We are human. We love. We hurt. We cry. I just wanted to write so anyone in my position could learn to hang in there and to know that there is always a solution to your problems. But never be ashamed of who you are or what you are, because you are what you are and nobody but you could be happy with yourself.

Yours Truly, Antonio, age 16

(Antonio dropped out of high school 2 months after this letter was written)

LESBIAN/GAY YOUTH SUICIDE*

A report just released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Task Force on Youth Suicide acknowledges that lesbian and gay youth are at increased risk for suicide, and calls for "an end (to) discrimination against youths on the basis of such characteristics as disability, sexual orientation, and financial status."

The report, which was prepared under former DHHS Secretary Otis R. Bowen, was completed in January, 1989 but did not receive publication until this past week. The 4-volume document identifies risk factors for youth suicide, reviews prevention and intervention activities, and defines strategies for the future.

"Accordingly to research discussed in the DHHS report, suicide is the leading cause of death among lesbian, gay, and other sexual minority youth," said Kevin Berrill, Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Forces' Anti-Violence Project. "The increased risk of suicide facing these youth is linked to growing up in a society that teaches them to hide and to hate themselves. We welcome this report and hope it will lead to action that will save lives."

The DHHS report reflects the findings and recommendations of three 1986 conferences sponsored by the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide. At the urging of NGLTF and other organizations, representatives of gay and gay-affirmative groups--including Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays and San Francisco's Community United Against Violence--were invited to attend the conferences. "All of us who participated at these events spoke forcefully of the need to deal with the gay youth suicide issue head on," said Berrill.

The final report also features approximately 50 papers commissioned by the DHHS Task Force on Youth Suicide, including papers on lesbians and gay youth suicide by Paul Gibson, LCSW and Joseph Harry, among gay male, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual youth," and concluded that lesbian and gay youth "may comprise up to 30 percent of completed suicides annually." Dr. Harry's paper concluded that "homosexuals of both sexes are two to six times more likely to attempt suicide than are heterosexuals.

In a section focusing on prevention and interventions, the report stated that "mental health and youth service agencies can provide acceptance and support for young homosexuals, train their personnel on gay issues, and provide appropriate gay adult role models; schools can protect gay youth from abuse from their peers and provide accurate information about homosexuality in health curricula; families should accept their child and work toward educating themselves about the development and nature of homosexuality."

*REACTIONS, July, 1989.

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CHAPTER 4

GAY AND LESBIAN ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Photo: Valerie Snyder (L to R: Lamonta Pierson, Lynn Shepodd, Honey Ward)

"I'm proud of my lesbian daughter"

"It's been more than a decade since we at home were responding to Lynn's 'I'm gay' letter mailed from college. Reading it to the family, I suddenly knew I'd had a plan for Lynn, and this was off course.

She had had to put miles between us before making here announcement and I was feeling here courage. How terrible for her to have worried: 'Will they love me after they know . . . love me with restrictions . . . check me off?'

The process of my adjustment wasn't instant or without fluctuation, but I asked myself, what of real importance had changed? Lynn was still my pretty and winsome daughter, still the young woman, a crusader, bent on correcting every social and political shortcoming. Surely, she was entitled to here own life.

Twelve busy years have passed. My 'Lynn' file bulges with her writings, causes, and activities. It seems that her calling has always been political so that is where she works. She has established, with a perfect companion, a remarkable, loving home full of trust and respect.

Yes, I not only love my daughter, I am filled with a sense of pride and completion as her life unfolds."

Lamonta Pierson

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INTRODUCTION

Family relationships are a major concern for lesbian and gay adolescents. A great deal of anxiety is often associated with whether or not to disclose one's homosexuality to parents, and if so, how it should be done.

There is no formula for this process, and the ways children "come out" are as varied as the individuals themselves.

The fear of rejection or disapproval is ever present. For some young people the threat of expulsion from the home is very real. In many instances, exposure is forced: parents discover their child's homosexuality by accident, and the young person is pressed into revealing the fact prior to adequate preparation.

The strategy of deception which characterizes the development of lesbian and gay socialization distorts almost all relationships, including family relationships. The adolescent may attempt to develop or maintain and create an increasing sense of isolation. The adolescent realizes that her or his membership in the family is based on a lie.

Even in their homes, the youngsters are forced to act a role. Distancing becomes a mechanism of survival for lesbian and gay adolescents with the fear that their parents will discover their secret.

Ineffective communication, poor self-esteem and unresolved grief and anger often complicate "coming out." Frequently, misinformation about homosexuality, religious beliefs, and homophobia can have a negative influence in the disclosure process.

In some cases the issue of homosexuality can be successfully negotiated without assistance. However, this is not always true and in many cases teenagers and parents will have to meet with health professionals on a regular basis.

COMING OUT TO PARENTS, an excellent booklet for both parents and children is available without charge from Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc. P.O. Box 24565, Los Angeles, CA 90024. (Send SASE)

Among other things, this booklet discusses questions a person needs to consider before "coming out."

1. Are you sure about your sexual orientation?
2. Are you comfortable with your gay/lesbian sexuality?
3. Do you have support?
4. Are you knowledgeable about homosexuality?
5. What is the emotional climate at home?
6. Can you be patient?
7. What is your motive for coming out now?
8. Do you have available resources?
9. Are you financially dependent on your parents?
10. What is your general relationship with your parents?
11. What is their moral societal view?
12. Is this your decision?

ADELE STARR

Founder of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc.

My name is Adele Starr.... I'm wearing two hats today. I'm the mother of five children. Larry and I have four sons and a daughter--one of our sons is gay. And I'm also the past president of the Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays and the current president of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Los Angeles.

I got involved in this because many years ago when my son was 18, which is about 20 years ago, he came to us and told us that he was gay. In those days, it was like the dark ages. We did not know where to turn for help--and wherever I turned, I was told that his condition was sick, he was a sinner and other terrible things. All this was told to a mother, to a family who considered themselves the perfect "good housekeeping" kind of family. About 13 years ago another parent and I started a group in Los Angeles to help parents understand and come to terms with their gay and lesbian children. What we didn't know would evolve was several things that we have learned.

We have learned that it is natural for about ten percent of our population to be attracted to the same sex. We have learned there is no choice. We have learned this in a very difficult way. By listening to countless stories of turmoil that has happened within families where there have been throwaways, runaways, suicides, almost suicides, you'll hear many of these stories today I'm sure.

We also learned there is no pattern to the kind of background, temperament of family.... Some gay or lesbian children are twins or only children, large and small families, every culture, rich, poor, Democrat, Republican--you name it. THERE SIMPLY IS ABOUT 10% OF OUR CHILDREN THAT ARE GAY OR LESBIAN. IT IS A FACT.

And we strongly feel that how we handle our sexuality is what matters--responsible sex. My gay son has been in a monogamous relationship for 14 years, and I'm thankful to God that he survived all those years when we didn't understand him at all. FOR MANY THAT ISN'T ALWAYS THE CASE.

In the schools it is extremely important that we have PROJECT 10. We are a model to the nation, not just to Los Angeles. In the schools it is not only the student who is gay or lesbian, but also the student who has a gay or lesbian parent and is afraid to tell anyone. It is the sister or brother of a gay or lesbian person who is confused and cannot handle the situation. Even the well-informed student, one who understands homosexuality, is afraid to speak out on behalf of a gay person for fear of alienation and harassment by peers. My own daughter in one of her classes spoke out on behalf of her brother. Afterwards, a young man stopped her and poured out his heart to her because he had a lesbian mother and had not been able to talk to anyone about his feelings until that moment.

Testimony presented at a public hearing on PROJECT 10, June 23, 1988.

"My Daughter Is a Lesbian," By Robert A. Bernstein*

WASHINGTON--Typically, the parent of a gay child passes through successive stages of shock, disbelief, sorrow and, sooner or later, acceptance. For many of us, however, there is yet another phase: outrage against society's stereotypical thinking that would relegate our gay loved ones to second-class citizenship.

Some of us have a dream. It is that millions of angered parents will someday coalesce in a powerful crusade for societal change.

For the moment, we remain a puny David in a mismatch with a homophobic Goliath. Millions of Americans live in daily terror lest disclosure of their sexual orientation deprive them of jobs, promotions, housing and a variety of social and political advantages.

Stereotypes shun logic and reason and at least temporarily can block the natural flow of parental affections. But the primal instinct to love and protect one's young, however latent, embodies an immense potential for social reform.

My daughter is a lesbian. She also is the light of my life, a warm and talented young woman whose joyous spirit helps brighten the lives of others. Ironically, she is now an even better person for having learned to live honestly and openly in a hostile society.

My own path to activism was charted by an organization called P-Flag, an acronym for Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. It is essentially a support group, a sort of alchemist of the soul that converts bereaved parents into active agents of acceptance. It leads us gently through the thickets of wrong-headed conventional wisdom and back to where we belong--at our children's sides.

Among other things, we learn that we did not "cause," and our children did not "choose," their homosexuality--that sexual orientation, like warts or perfect pitch, is a matter of biological roulette. We also learn that the much maligned "life style" of the average gay person is about as lurid as our own, centered on such mundane matters as jobs, friends, hobbies and church. The gay community, it turns out, contains about the same proportion of saints to rascals as any other.

The political potential of these parental conversions was brought home to me at a march on Washington for lesbian and gay rights last autumn. My daughter's mother and I were among the marchers, with other members of P-Flag. We made up a relatively tiny contingent, a grizzled crew of a few hundred parents in a sea of mostly youthful people variously estimated at from 200,000 to 600,000 people.

Dramatically, however, this token symbolic presence touched off a stirring in the crowd that soon grew to a thunderous roar of cheers and applause that followed us all the way down Pennsylvania Avenue--a measure, surely, of the yearning of the young people for the support and understanding of their own parents.

But that yearning cannot be any stronger than the potential of their parents' reciprocal affections. It was after the march, as I pondered the strength of the parent-child bond and the sheer numbers of homosexual Americans, that I could envision the doom of homophobia's reign.

It is estimated that there are upward of 25 million gay people, who by definition started out with some 50 million parents. Sooner or later, a large portion of those parents will want to enlist in the crusade for their children's dignity. When that happens, a significant slice of the nation's voters, fired by the familial bonds, will be dedicated to the most basic of freedoms: the right to be what one is

*The NEW YORK TIMES, Wednesday, February 24, 1988.

Dear Mom,

You said earlier this summer that if I ever had a problem and I didn't feel comfortable enough to talk about it that I could write. Well, I'm sort of in that sistuation now. I don't have a problem, but I do have something to talk to you about that I'm afraid you won't react well to. So, I'm writing it down so I don't have to face the initial reaction. Sorry for taking the cowardly way out.

I'm gay. There I said it. I hope that it's something you'll be able to accept--or at least love me despite. I've hardly explored my sexual feelings at all--just enough to know I'm gay. I wanted to be open about it before I started any kind of social life. There's a whole lot more to talk about but I think it can wait until the two of us can discuss it face to face.

I hope that this doesn't ruin your vacation but I think the time away will prepare us both to face each other honestly. Please discuss your feelings with Dad--he already knows and suggested I tell you at this time (probably because you two will have several days to talk about it alone).

I hope this doesn't hurt you or make you think you are a bad parent or that I'm doing this to rebel or hurt you. All I can say is that it's taken me many long, lonely years to face up to it myself. Now that I have, I must live with it with my family and friends too. I hope you understand...

I love you,

Jeff

Jeff Stabile attends UCLA and is a member of the gay fraternity, Delta Lambda Phi

Dear Mom and Dad,

This letter has been sitting for long time inside my brain waiting to be written. I chose this moment to write to you, because I am seeing someone now who means a great deal to me. Contrary to what you might want to believe or hope for, the person I am involved with is a woman--not a man. Her name is _____, and we are very happy together.

Because of this I feel that I must say to you that I am a lesbian, which may or may not be a surprise to you. I have spent years struggling with my homosexuality and have finally some to be okay with it. For this reason, I have never been able to be close to you--I have always felt a need to hide that part of myself. I want to be who I am without regret or guilt--I am tired of hiding. Much of our conflict and non-communication we have experienced has been as a result of my inability to talk about that part of my life which was/is me.

I am hoping you will read this letter with a spirit of having an open heart and an open mind--that both _____ and I will be accepted totally and unconditionally by both of you. This is all I ask for--nothing more. Please understand that for the first time in my life I have found happiness, and more than that, I am at peace with myself. It's my desire to share this happiness with you and in return to receive respect and understanding for the life I have chosen for myself.

You need to know that as my parents I do care for you and always have. That is why I feel I must share this with you now. Perhaps conflicts between us can be more easily resolved now that I have given myself permission to be truthful and honest.

Understand how difficult it was to bring myself to finally write this letter and to ask for what I am asking. Think about this letter carefully--talk to anyone you need to--I am not hiding anymore.

Lastly, pick up the phone and/or come over when you feel ready to discuss this. _____ (sister) and _____ (brother-in-law) already know about this--so, you can talk with them.

Love You,

_____(daughter)

This letter was found posted on the refrigerator door

DEAR MOM,

I'M A HOMOSEXUAL. I'LL BE HOME AROUND 10 TONIGHT.

Love,

Keith

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CHAPTER 5

ADOLESCENT SEXUALITY: LESBIAN AND GAY HEALTH ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

One of the most pressing problems facing us are the medical/psychological situations presented by homosexual youth. For purposes of discussion, "homosexual youth" refers not only to those who identify as "gay" but also those who engage in same-sex behavior but deny such labeling. Despite the reluctance of many young people to equate homosexual behavior with a homosexual identity, substantial health risks exist among both males and females. Young men who engage in homosexual behavior are clearly at risk for sexually transmitted diseases, especially if they have multiple and anonymous sex partners. Although lesbians experience considerably fewer sexually related illnesses than heterosexual women, they often present psychological problems complicated by a concealed sexuality.

Counseling About Sexually Transmitted Disease

The sexually related illnesses of male homosexuals can be grouped into four categories: "classic" sexually transmitted diseases, viral illnesses, the traumatic complications of anal sexual activity, and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or AIDS. Features of these illnesses should be known and included as part of the supportive health services in the schools. Often the school nurse, school psychologist, counselor or health teacher may be the first to be consulted when issues of adolescent homosexuality arise. Based on this fact, the following guidelines are proposed to assist school personnel:

1. When counseling young people, be alert for health issues that might indicate homosexual behavior, i.e., abdominal complaints, vague and guarded references to sexually transmitted diseases, and general comments about poor health. Adolescents are often resistant to discussing issues of sexuality, fearing disapproval or breach of confidence. If the staff member feels uncomfortable or unprepared to address the subject of sexual orientation, an appropriate referral should be made to a professional who has established expertise in the area of sexuality.

2. The revelation of an adolescent's homosexuality is a potential setting for intense family discord, and even physical and emotional abuse. Individuals who work with adolescents should be attentive to this possibility and prepared to intervene in the child's behavior. In addition, parents and families may require professional support or counseling in dealing with their own confusion, anger, guilt and loss.

3. The sexually active youngster should be encouraged to establish an on-going relationship with a physician and be examined regularly and tested for sexually related diseases.

4. The adolescent's visit with a school staff member is an opportunity for education. Most young people need assistance in areas of sexual decision making, personal hygiene,

prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and substance abuse. This is an excellent opportunity for an adult to encourage youngsters to get regular health care.

5. It should not be assumed that every student is heterosexual. Looks can be very deceiving, Whenever possible, gender-neuter words like "relationship" or "friend" should be used as opposed to "boyfriend" or "girlfriend."

6. The importance of securing a social history on a youngster cannot be overstressed. At Children's Hospital in Los Angeles, a HEADS Exam is done. Briefly stated, this includes information about a child's home, educational and employment history, ambitions, activities, favorite music, experience with drugs, and sexual history, including dating patterns.

   While this may not always be possible in the school setting, information in these basic areas can yield an abundance of important information to a school nurse, school psychologist or other support personnel.

The weight of evidence indicates that teenagers do not always act in a sexually responsible way. Although they may say otherwise, adolescent males who are having sex with other males are usually engaging in unsafe sex practices. "Safer sex" implies a conceptualization of being homosexual that many young people are unprepared to accept. The typical adolescent lack of regard for the long-term future, and feelings of dissociation from behavioral consequences make the reality of AIDS a major concern for any school professional. The potential consequences of unsafe sex must be stressed repeatedly in open, frank and caring discussions. For the non-gay population, "safer sex" messages are often discarded, the perception still exists that AIDS is a gay disease.

Since the subject of sexual orientation is often difficult to discuss, it is extremely important that non-threatening material be visible. Important phone numbers, materials from the lesbian and gay Community Services Center and other community resources should be posted in a conspicuous spot.

If questions, perhaps generated by a specific presenting problem, are used in a sympathetic tone, much of the discomfort felt by both parties in the meeting can be overcome and a surprising frankness can occur. It is important to remember that the developmental stages in acquiring a homosexual identity is not something that happens overnight, and for many it is a great turmoil. Two to four years often separate the age of the first homosexual experience and age of designating oneself as homosexual. The depth of revulsion toward homosexual activity in our society, especially for males, results in few places a young person can turn to discuss such problems without being condemned. In this respect the school can provide an invaluable service to the child.

Women who have sex exclusively with other women do not present the range of sexually transmitted diseases that are seen in gay males. However, sexuality is not always so narrowly defined. Both boys and girls may engage in same-sex and opposite-sex behavior, and the possibility of disease

transmission is very high. To this should be added the incidence of AIDS transmission through contaminated needles in intravenous drug use.

Psychological Concerns

In addition to medical problems, homosexual adolescents may be at risk for serious psychological problems. Such difficulties are often reflected in changes in performance or behavior in school activities, household or employment. Progress in these areas should be monitored carefully by school officials. School staff should also be alert to such situations as social isolation, running away, prostitution (negative responses from family and peers is an important factor predisposing to survival prostitution), substance abuse, compromised mental health, damaged self-esteem, depression, anxiety and suicide.

The existing literature (see Chapter 3) clearly and consistently shows that homosexuals of both sexes attempt suicide more often than do heterosexuals. Further, the nature of the suicide attempts indicate that gay men were more likely to report that their attempts were related to trying to deal with their homosexual identity than was the case for lesbians whose attempts were more likely related to the breakup of relationships.

Educators in junior and senior high school often encounter young people who are in what has been described as a "pre-coming out" stage. Because adolescents are often unable to verbally define their feelings, it is especially important to have literature or signs in visible spots to signal the accessibility of school adults. It is interesting to note that because of the concealed nature of homosexuality, and the inability to articulate feelings during the "pre-coming out" stage, counselors and other school personnel often think that lesbian and gay youngsters do not exist.

School personnel should be especially cognizant of the correlation between conflicts over one's homosexual identity and such issues as suicide and substance abuse, both of which have been linked to increased risk in lesbian and gay adolescents. Although school programs often ignore this connection, much can be gained by understanding that such a connection exists. One gay teenager involved in a school drug prevention program illustrates this need:

> Mitchell S., White, Age 17. I really did appreciate what Mrs. S. was trying to do in those groups, but none of it applied to me. What did any of them know about what was going on in my life? I wasn't about to say anything because I don't think any of them understood what it's like to be gay. So I just went along with the program and said what I was supposed to say. Why be hurt? There probably were other gay kids in group that felt exactly like I did and just went along with it.

Self-esteem Issues

A final area of which school personnel should be aware is the general area of self-esteem. Not only do adolescent homosexuals hear constant rounds of verbal abuse in the form of words like "faggot" and "queer," but they also internalize negative attitudes about homosexuality which contribute to a highly diminished sense of self-esteem. These attitudes are summarized so that teachers and other school personnel can gain insight in the critical area of esteem among lesbian and gay teenagers.

Perhaps because males are valued more than females in our society and male events are viewed as more important than female events, negative attitudes about homosexuality are more directed toward males than females. Male heterosexuals are more negative toward male homosexuals than toward lesbians. There is also a prevalent but erroneous view that homosexuals behave like the opposite sex. Therefore, males are often taunted mercilessly by their classmates. A more subtle manifestation of this is the perception by many lesbian and gay teenagers that because they are homosexual, they are not "men," or they are not "women."

Often males who are experiencing same-sex feelings will refuse to go to P.E. classes, and this will be the first thing that brings them to the attention of their counselor. Although boys who are perceived as feminine or gay are subject to extraordinary verbal abuse in these settings, sexual arousal appears to be a main reason for avoidance of the classes:

> John C., 18 years, White. ...when I was in 7th grade I started cutting P.E. I just couldn't go. It was too humiliating.... I mean I was scared to death I might have an erection. How was I supposed to tell my counselor why I was cutting P.E.? Maybe it happens to other guys, but I've never seen it. I was only concerned about myself. I felt rotten.

Although lesbians do not always suffer the type of overt discrimination found among gay males, their self-esteem is severely damaged by the sexism present in our society as well as the self-hatred they internalize as lesbians. Data suggests that lesbians do not express themselves as early as gay males. For that reason, the high school years may be especially confusing with regard to their sexuality. Counselors should be aware of this and alert for signs of isolation and depression. Often, teenage lesbians will not show the type of outward stress symptoms that are exhibited by gay males. As a result, they may be overlooked or trivialized.

The importance of counteracting negative feelings on the part of lesbian and gay teenagers cannot be overstressed. Young homosexuals must have positive images to which they can relate in order to reverse their sense of diminished self-esteem. Whenever possible, leaders of the lesbian and gay community should be identified and invited to speak to classes. Appropriate literature should be made available, as well as examples of positive role models. It is also important to discuss elements that people look for in establishing good relationships.

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CHAPTER 6

MINORITY ISSUES

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INTRODUCTION

The various cultures and races reflected in the United States are also reflected in the lesbian and gay population. Such adolescents face the prospect of living their lives within three rigidly defined and strongly independent communities: the lesbian and gay community, their ethnic or racial community, and the society at large. Each community fulfills basic needs which are often imperiled if such communities were to be visibly integrated. A common result is the constant effort to maintain a manner of living that keeps the three communities separate, a process that leads to increased isolation, depression and anger centered around the fear of being separated from all support systems including the family.

A unique feature of the ethnic family constellation is that it centers around the integration of the extended family within its support system. The ethnic family support system resembles more of a tribe with multiple family groups rather than a nuclear family structure consisting solely of parents and children. For the ethnic person the family constitutes a symbol of their basic roots and the focal point of their ethnic identity. "Coming out" to the family is a different process for the ethnic gay and lesbian than for the non-ethnic person since such a process tends to involve more than just the nuclear family.

Aside from the involvement of more family members, the family collective is the major support system for the ethnic person during the arduous times of experiencing discrimination, slander and inferior treatment. The family is the source of great strength for primary relationships; in other words the family is the emotional bond for their conscious self and personal psychology. "Coming out" to the family not only jeopardizes the intrafamily relationships but also threatens their strong association with their ethnic community. As a result they run the risk of feeling uprooted as an ethnic person.

Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is often compounded by economic disadvantage. The ethnic person is a visible minority and, therefore, is more easily subjected to discrimination policies. Among blacks and Hispanics, employment discrimination is often present despite the level of education, academic degrees and years of employment. Further, unemployment rates are higher among some minority groups adding the burden of poverty , drug and alcohol abuse to quality of interaction among ethnic lesbians and gays.

The upholding of negative stereotyping and the practice of discrimination against lesbians and gays places the ethnic gay man and lesbian as the least desirable combination for acceptance and assimilation. A hierarchy, suggesting preferences for Whites over Latins, over Blacks, over Asians, over American Indians or any combination of these except for Whites, defines and complicates the level and intensity of discrimination. This endless downward spiral continues when one introduces other variables such as gender, sex role behavior, physical disabilities, shades of skin color, age, religious affiliation, and other variables.

Underutilization of mental health services by minorities is a well known fact. Social services are often inadequate because of language problems, culture and class differences, lack of minority counselors, and lack of training and sensitivity to lesbian and gay issues. In most minority groups the family is the primary socializing function. The family buffers its individual members from the stressfulness of being a minority in an Anglo society. It has also been depicted as a defense adaptation--"they take care of their own"--and the underutilization of mental health services has been attributed to this phenomenon.

Finally, the role of the church and other cultural influences which rigidly define sex roles make it especially difficult for minority lesbians and gays to develop positive self-esteem.

The ethnic lesbian and gay community has begun to establish various groups in order to maintain support systems and to unify its efforts toward reducing the oppression this community experiences. Ethnic groups and conferences have become more varied and frequent. The formation of such groups and conferences appears to be a healthy way to deal with the social and political realities which ethnic gay men and lesbians experience daily.

School personnel need to recognize the special issues that exist among minority lesbians and gays and should work toward understanding cross cultural differences.

BELINDA

Most of my friends call me "Bee," but my name is Belinda. I am a 17 year old black lesbian and a senior at Fairfax High School. Many may think that it is easy and perhaps not even important, but coming from a person with a lifetime of experience, I know what it's like to grow up in the black community.

There are many complications in the black community--drugs, gangs, no place to go, nothing exciting to do. This is everyday life for me--going to school and going home.

Being 17 doesn't help much. I'm either too old to play with my brother or too young to hang out with my sister. I have to listen to what my mother says, yet develop a life of my own. This is where my lesbianism is modified.

I've always had feelings of being a lesbian, but being in a black Baptist family, it wasn't much talked about. Yet when it was, it wasn't condemned. I had a lot of play "uncles" who were gay, but I never knew what it was until I started recognizing my own feelings. This is when I became distant from friends and family. I didn't talk to my family a lot, because I was afraid that something might slip, or what's worse, that they would ask me about a boyfriend. Friends were really a problem because boys are all that young girls my age discuss.

I didn't know what being a lesbian was all about or if it was o.k. So I didn't talk to anyone about it or tell any of my friends what I was feeling. I became non-social in school and spent most of my time in the library. I basically stayed by myself. I was more comfortable that way. At least I thought I was until I started feeling lonely.

One day I told a friend of mine that I was a lesbian. I thought that she could deal with it, and did for a while. A few days after talking about me and discussing our differences, she wrote me a letter. The letter was so harsh. She told me that she no longer wanted to be my friend. I was so hurt. I had experienced the rejection that my other gay friends talked about. And rejection is enough to make anyone want to give up.

In the community where I lived, there was nothing clean or safe for young black lesbians to do. All the desired things such as rap groups, dances, plays, and youth centers were in West Hollywood, and without a car, the activities were hard to reach. So what I began to do was read. I would read lesbian fiction novels and also documentary books that gave me the feeling of not being alone. PROJECT 10 also played an important part in my maturing. It helped build my self-esteem and gave me a positive direction in which to go. I began to participate in school activities such as the Westchester High School health fair. I sat at a PROJECT 10 booth, shared with the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center along

with two other lesbians. It was a very nice experience. I was able to answer questions that students asked. I also learned that people are eager to learn more about homosexuality, but because the information is not available, they tend to be scared of the unknown.

Now, as part of my lesbian and feminist calling, I want to try to encourage and help more of the young lesbians in the black community to feel and know that it is "o.k." to be a lesbian. I would like to start a gay community center in the black community so that we won't have to leave home to be accepted. But also, it will aliow us to grow together as one, not only to strengthen the black community but also to know more about homosexuality. Perhaps one day it will be accepted as a special thing rather than as a fault.

The Hard Reality Of Latina Lesbians

by Olga E. Vives
National Board Member,
Great Lakes Region

In Latin America, to be a lesbian is intolerable. Family and society, influenced by the teachings of the Catholic Church, look upon lesbians as social outcasts—without rights and privileges, unworthy of respect and the love of society, family and friends. Some lesbians have to choose exile as a way of surviving and exercising their sexual preference.

Carmen left Ecuador ten years ago because she couldn't live in her country as a lesbian. Amelia, caught holding hands with her lover by her parents, was forced to leave Columbia virtually overnight because she had brought "shame" to her family. Maria Elena had to choose between emigrating to the United States or facing jail in Cuba, even though she had taken an active part in the Cuban revolution, because homosexuality in Cuba is a punishable crime.

Even in the United States though, Latina lesbians are confronted with multiple discrimination—as women, as Latinas, as immigrants, and as lesbians.

Exile almost always brings economic disadvantages. Latinas in the United States earn only 80 percent of a white woman's wages. Immigrants enter the work force in lower-paying jobs because they enter a job market that is new to them, and that has the added disadvantage of their foreign status and language barriers. Health care problems arise when health insurance is not available or affordable. Furthermore, lack of health care services for the unisured and the poor prevents Latinas from seeking those services in their communities.

Added to the economic, health care and immigration issues is the rejection Latina lesbians face from the Latino communities in the United States where they settle, hoping to find a support network and cultural affinity once they are in this country

Latina lesbians spend every day of their lives facing the fact that they must be invisible in order to survive. They hide from their own Latino communities, from the Anglo-American society that looks down on them, from their families and friends, and from themselves.

Latina lesbians must be included in the movement to bring about equality for all women, with the recognition that the issues of Latina lesbians are often different from white lesbians. Inclusion in the movement can empower them by recognizing their oppression and by working with other women to preserve their heritage and culture.

At the National NOW Conference in Cincinnati in July, NOW members passed a resolution that endorsed the Lesbian Rights Agenda developed last Fall in San Diego. The resolution identified several issues that NOW will work on during the next year including the development of information literature to be included in the Lesbian Rights Resource kit.

An important section of this kit will deal with issues of special significance to lesbians of color, including Latina lesbains.

NOW chapters are encouraged to order the kit and use it to develop outreach programs to Latina lesbians and all lesbians of every color.

National Times, Publication of NOW. Vol. XXII #3, July/Aug./Sept. 1989

INTERVIEW WITH LESTER WONG AND LILLIAN GEE

FROM THE DOCUMENTARY "PINK TRIANGLE"

Lester: So I went to my mother who was asking me why wasn't I dating a girl? And why I wasn't planning on getting married, and was I going to get married?

And I tried to explain to her in Chinese, 'cause she doesn't speak English, that I'm gay. And the way I had to do it was to say, "Ma, I love men."

And her reaction was, "I don't care if you love men, you still have to get married."

I grew up in Chinatown and all my friends were Chinese until I decided to "come out." And coming out meant leaving and knowing that you couldn't get support from your friends or community--and not even trying to because you're afraid to ask. And trying to go to a white gay lifestyle--and trying to fit in there. It didn't work.

Lillian: In Asian culture I have my role as a woman, but their is no role at all for me as a lesbian. I think outside of Chinatown, in white America, it's a much more violent opposition to gay people--it's a much more actively negative thing to be gay.

Lester: Growing up as a little Chinese kid--all these ignorant white ideas--these people calling me "fag" for no reason at all--it was a racial thing. They needed someone to dump on and they used the words "fag," "queer," and "sissy," on me because I was Chinese.

Lillian: I think that's the way racism and homophobia came from--exactly the same fears on the part of whites. And so they use a homophobia expression like "faggot" to really express a racial fear.

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CHAPTER 7

INTERVENTION AND COUNSELING WITH LESBIAN AND GAY TEENAGERS

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INTRODUCTION

Individual Conferencing

Individual conferencing can take place in many different ways. A student may have mentioned a critical incident in a class discussion or in a writing assignment, and the teacher wishes to inquire further. A student may ask to speak privately to a teacher. Perhaps a student's performance or behavior may have alerted the teacher to a possible incident. Or, a student may have been referred to a counselor or may have self-referred to some support person on the staff.

The following strategies have proven helpful in dealing with individual conferences with students in distress:

FIND PRIVACY--If possible, try to find a place where the student can be assured of some privacy. Perhaps a cubicle in the counselor's office or in some other office. Avoid placing yourself in a compromising situation. Don't go off campus. Stay visible to others.

ASSURE CONFIDENTIALITY--Within the legal limits, assure the student that what is said will remain confidential.

MAINTAIN CALM--It is very important that the adult present a balanced demeanor so that the student knows that he or she has permission to talk freely about the source of the distress.

BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF--Keep in touch with your own feelings and reactions to the student, the issues, and the situation. This is especially important in an emotionally laden subject like homosexuality. If you feel you cannot handle the situation, ask someone else to take over, and arrange the transition.

VALIDATE FEELINGS--Listen well to the feelings that are being expressed by the student. Help the student clarify feelings. Use gentle probes for clarification and elaboration. Use increasingly focused questions when appropriate.

PROVIDE INFORMATION--The correct information at the right time can be very helpful. Be sure not to preach, however, and be sure that your own need to "do something" is not clouding your judgement regarding the timeliness of the information.

EXPLORE RESOURCES--As soon as possible, explore with the student what resources he or she has available, and what their support system provides. Assist them in deciding who, when and how to reach out for that support.

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN GATES, SAAS COUNSELOR
HUNTINGTON PARK HIGH SCHOOL

J: While at this school, SAAS counselors are given a lot of permission to do counseling. The typical high school campus does not have the luxury of a mental health clinic.

V: What does most of your work involve?

J: Most of the work of a counselor is immediate, crisis type intervention and referral to appropriate sources.

We try to get someone through a crisis situation to a point where they are willing to accept a further look into themselves, and then we try to find an appropriate resource for them.

V: Have you dealt with many openly gay and lesbian youngsters?

J: I have, but not very many. Because of the hidden nature homosexuality, very few kids are willing to talk about it. In four years, ten students, eight of them were male.

V: What have you found to be the most common problems coming through the door?

J: The most common presenting problems have been infatuation with the same sex teachers, infatuation with classmates of the same sex, and refusal to strip for physical education. A lot of what's come to my attention has centered around gym, disrobing, body check, body image and overstimulation.

V: Well, it took me a long time to find that out. Often that's the first way that a gay kid will come to the attention of a counselor. They won't strip for PE. I always thought that it was because they were harassed so much, and there is some of that element in there--they get called "faggot" so much--but finally someone explained that it's because they have erections. Maybe it happens to other guys too, but it doesn't trouble them in the same way.

J: Or, there's a denial process that goes on so they don't have to deal with it.

V: Have you ever had any instances of crossdressing?

J: We did have one young man who was referred because he actually did some crossdressing or some acting out on campus. He was admittedly gay, had had some homosexual experiences, and considered himself gay. It created quite a flap here, because he and a friend of his put on more or less what I would consider unisex clothes, but some of the

other kids didn't see it that way. It created quite a stir on campus. That was an angry acting out. Some real angry acting out.

V: So how would you handle a kid like that?

J: This young man was very interesting. One of the thingshad happened was that his father had alluded to his being "queer" for a long time without ever really addressing the issue. His father had never really looked at it. One of the things I shared with him (the student) was a pamphlet put out by Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) called COMING OUT TO YOUR PARENTS.

Basically he was talking about how could he tell his dad? How could he get his dad to see him as a person? Part of what he did here on campus was to force his dad to take a look at him and see him for what he was. When his dad came down to the campus, the deans were initially involved because it had become a discipline problem out in the yard.

As we got to talking, Dad was saying, "I don't know what's wrong with him--he acts so 'queer'." Basically, his father's initial reaction was that his son acted so "queer."

I started by asking, "what does 'queer' mean to you? I don't use it in my vocabulary very often."

It gave the father a chance to pinpoint what he was talking about. Just to get to the subject of homosexuality took a great deal of time. So you could see where he was coming from. It wasn't something that could even enter into his thought process, let alone something he could openly discuss with his son.

From there, I was able to say, "what is it about homosexuality that frightens you?"

He was able to say, "that my son might be gay."

To which, because his dad had gotten to that point, the boy was able to say, "why are you afraid of me--I am gay."

Part of his being able to say that was because I was there. This was a neutral place.

From there, it was getting Dad to understand a little bit that for whatever reason and however this young man saw his gayness, whatever he determined to be his definition of gay, his father had to accept that this was his son. We did make a referral to the Parent/Flag organization.

There is still a long road, and I've seen the young man since. It's not good, but he's still living at home and he and his dad have a relationship--tense at times, but a relationship nevertheless.

V: Is he still crossdressing?

J: No, he's not. He's still having gay relationships, but he's not crossdressing any longer. And part of it is Dad has at least understood. I'm not sure that he accepts it, but he has understood. I'm not sure that acceptance will ever be there for this particular father, but at least the father knows, and the boy is no longer hiding. His acting out in public at least caused his father to look at him. Whether they will ever be able to have a good relationship is questionable, but at least they can deal on a more honest level.

That's really the kind of intervention I try to do with any kid, including gay and lesbian kids. I try to get them to be able to deal with the people they're having trouble with--at least on the first level, and then we take it from there.

V: Let me review this for a moment. Crushes on same sex teachers and classmates, refusing to strip for PE, and occasionally crossdressing--these are certainly the things that have come to my attention since I've been working with gay and lesbian kids.

On the crossdressing, I think that may of the gay and lesbian kids internalize society's view of homosexuality--that if you are gay, you somehow must not be a man, and if you are a lesbian, you are not a woman. When I was doing my research in the area of adolescent homosexuality, I was surprised at the consistency of the belief that homosexuals behave like the opposite sex. And I've talked to lots of gay male adolescents who think they are women--not really in a physical sense, but in a psychological sense.

And what was the other thing, oh, refusal to go to gym.

J: Yes, that has been the most common thing. Of the ten students I worked with, five of them (all males) refused to attend PE classes. Discomfort in dressing and undressing was what brought them to me.

V: Have you ever encountered instances of harassment?

J: No, not really, because by the time they get to high school, name calling and harassment are dealt with as disciplinary matters and are handled by the deans. Sometimes name calling and other kinds of behavior problems all get lumped together and the real issue homosexuality is lost.

V: Have you dealt with any lesbians?

J: Yes, two out of the ten. In both cases they came to me because of infatuation with a female teacher.

V: Do you have many resources for the kids?

J: Not many. Partially because there aren't many resources available and then also because of the cultural influences.

V: So you really have to deal with most of these problems right on campus.

J: Yes, and sometimes I wish I had the luxury of some long term treatment, but I don't. So, most of the time it's simply trying to alleviate discomfort to a point where we can look at what the presenting problem is and a way to deal with that problem.

Sometimes there are groups available outside school, but there's always the problem of transportation.

V: So most of what gets done gets done on campus?

J: Right. We have a resource board available and the PROJECT 10 number is up there. It's a primary resource.

V: Do you have any experience with kids talking about their sexual feelings where you get a sense there might be some same sex behavior but they're not about to call themselves gay or lesbian?

J: In dealing with sex play issues, some kids will have guilt about past homosexual behavior. "Is it normal, is it abnormal, am I gay, am I not gay?" I say to them, "you have to tell me." I can tell you that developmental psychologists will say that you can expect a certain amount of same sex sex play in the growing up years, and it is not a determining factor on the sexual orientation as an adult. I say to the kid, "you have to tell me what's making you uncomfortable about this memory of the past incident. That's what we have to focus on. What's making you uncomfortable? What brought it back to you? Where's the discomfort coming from?"

V: How do kids come to you?

J: Self-referral. Through a friend. Not referred by teachers. We have PROJECT 10 signs up, so they are given permission to talk about it.

V: It seems that once they come to your attention, your approach is to be non-judgemental, informational and comforting.

J: I have to say the presenting problem is the presenting problem. I can't let myself get too emotionally invested in it. I simply have to look at it clinically.

What the kids come in the door with is what they've got--it's what's causing them pain, and you have to deal with it. And in crisis intervention counseling, you're trying to get at it and get it worked through and to try and get further help. But, you have to deal with what comes in the door.

V: Basically, these kids are not going to be able to be able to get private therapy--they will be suspicious of it or unable to afford it.

J: No, they are not. There are sliding scales agencies around, but even then many of the parents cannot afford it. And another thing, many of the agencies won't see a child without the parent's permission. Then the child has to tell the parent why he or she wants help.

Very often what I try to do here, simply, is maintenance counseling--making myself available to the child as often as possible. They can come to see me as often as they need to do so.

Another thing about referring a kid to an outside agency, is that you have to be careful about having them go into rival territory. The other issue down here is that you can't send the kids through too many cross neighborhoods. Compounding all of this is the gang problem. Some kids may actually be in danger by having to cross territorial lines. This area is a real difficult area to work in for that reason.

The problem is that there are so many things that get shadowed when we talk about homosexuality. Who knows what would come out if we had the time to really work with these kids. But most of the time we just have to deal with what come in the door.

IT IS NOT O.K.

This list was developed in one of Dr. Uribe's workshops during the summer of 1989. The 85 teachers and counselors present broke into groups and through comparison and elimination of redundant phrases, came up with this list, called THE NOT O.K. LIST.

IT IS NOT O.K. TO:

1. Name call or allow name calling in any language.

   It is totally unacceptable on the part of the adults, and should be monitored carefully when it happens among the students.

2. To say queer, fairy, Fairyfax, dyke, fag, faggot, butch, queen, sissy, maricon, culero or any other pejorative term.

3. To joke about one's sexual orientation or to tell jokes about homosexuals or to make AIDS jokes, etc.

4. It is not o.k. to say:
   How do you know?
   Are you sure? (when a student reveals sexual orientation)
   You will get over it when the right man/woman comes along.
   I don't agree with it, but I still like you.
   Have you tried dating the opposite sex?
   You will grow out of it.
   Do you think God is punishing you?
   Some of my best friends are.
   It's only a phase.
   Have you tried to change?
   I accept you but I don't agree with your choice.
   You are not normal.
   You don't look like one.
   You are sick.
   How did that happen?
   Don't you want to have children?
   You do have a problem.
   I don't want to hear about it.

What is wrong with you?
You are going to get AIDS.
I don't dislike homosexuals, it's what they do that I dislike.
Your family will reject you.
You won't be able to have a happy life.
Why don't you try to act more masculine/feminine?
You will embarrass the family.
Your parents won't love you.
What will your parents do?
You need counseling.

5. To talk about homosexuality as if it were a sickness or a deviance, or to say that gays caused AIDS, or that AIDS is a gay disease, or a punishment from God, or that PWA's should be isolated.

6. If a parent, do not say, where did I go wrong, or why are you doing this to me?

It Is O.K.

By Hilarie Blumfeld Ph.D.

Now that we've identified some of the words, phrases, and questions it's not OK to use, here are some suggestions about how to deal honestly and openly with homosexuality in the classroom or in a private conversation with a student who confides in you. The primary purpose of these suggestions is to help the homosexual student develop self-esteem and confidence without feeling invisible, humiliated, or oppressed.

It's OK to

1. Use appropriate terms, including "homosexual," "bi-sexual", "heterosexual," "gay," or "lesbian."
    - In general homosexual males prefer to be called gay.
    - Homosexual females prefer to be called lesbians.

2. Discourage jokes about homosexuals by saying:
    - That sort of joke is offensive and will not be tolerated in this classroom.
    - Jokes about any religious, racial, or sexual group are unacceptable in this classroom.
    - Jokes that make fun of people are unacceptable in this classroom.

3. Include the topic of homosexuality in classroom discussions where appropriate.
    - It is helpful to introduce homosexuality as one among several possible sexual orientations. You might present the various sexual orientations -- heterosexual, homosexual, bi-sexual, asexual -- together in a list that is informative but does not direct anyone toward or away from any particular position. When given several alternatives, most people identify with the one that best fits themselves and recognize the others as simply different. Such a list allows every student something to identify with and prevents the homosexual students from feeling invisible.

4. Be open to listening without judgment if an individual student confides in you that he or she is homosexual. Help the student share his or her feelings and thoughts by using open-ended, non-directive questions:
    - Tell me more.....
    - What concerns do you have?
    - Can you talk more about what's happening with you?
    - Can you share some of your feelings?
    - Do you have other people you can talk to as well? (This question is an effort to assess the students support system and possibly make an appropriate referral.)

CHAPTER 8

GETTING STARTED

More than anything else, the development of a support system for lesbian and gay youth depends upon the commitment of administrators, counselors, teachers and other school personnel.

Faculty workshops are particularly favored in order to educate faculty and staff about homosexuality and the problems that confront lesbian and gay students. Workshops for teachers about homosexuality and gay youth issues will produce a more tolerant atmosphere in classrooms; programs that reach administrators and counselors will lead them to treat gay students with more understanding.

Workshops for students have been very helpful. Discussing homosexuality and lesbian/gay teen concerns with an expert from outside the school allows all students to ask questions they may be reluctant to ask in a regular course.

Another important, effective method of counteracting homophobia is a curriculum that acknowledges the presence and contributions of gay people. Whenever appropriate, classes should engage in discussions that air student fears and prejudices against gay people, dispel popular myths and convey basic facts about homosexuality. Classes should also convey accurate information on AIDS and risk-reduction behavior.

Schools should have a policy specifically forbidding the harassment of lesbian and gay students and punishing intolerance and violence toward them. Codes of discipline with regard to name-calling (*See Appendix 2) should be developed and enforced.

PROJECT 10

AN OUTREACH TO GAY AND LESBIAN YOUTH

FOR INFORMATION: _____

PROJECT 10

THE MODEL CONCEPT

EDUCATION

Sensitization and awareness training of staff.

Direct liaison with counselors, school nurse and school psychologist regarding special needs of lesbian and gay youth.

Expansion of the school library in both fictional and nonfictional areas. Removal of perjorative material on homosexuality.

Development and coordination of a speaker's bureau.

SCHOOL SAFETY

School environment free of harassment and intimidation of sexual minorities.

Staff members trained in methods of recognizing and responding to victims of sexual harassment.

Backup system developed so that incidents are reported and acted upon swiftly.

DROPOUT PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Informal rap groups, drop-in counseling and peer counseling experiences.

Inclusion of the lesbian and gay perspective in existing suicide and substance abuse prevention programs.

Youth programs that give affirmative social experiences.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Accessibility to community resources.

Referrals to mental health personnel for in-depth counseling.

Private sector.

Human resources agencies.

Hotlines.

A SCHOOL DISTRICT'S DREAM*

Project 10 is a school district's dream. If Project 10 were a business venture, people would be lining up to buy franchises. It costs very little money to start, and it has a tremendous potential for return on your investment. For about the cost of one student dropout per year, you can begin a program that will touch hundreds of young lives--a program that will improve self-esteem, assist in suicide prevention, monitor accurate AIDS information as it applies to the life and death issues of gay teenagers, and promote tolerance among students who are going to live in a society that is increasingly diverse.

Why is it so difficult, then, to sell this program? Because PROJECT 10 deals with a target group that historically has been underserved by the educational system--lesbian and gay youth. What is our responsibility to these children? Are we in public education to serve the needs of all our youngsters? Or do we pick only the issues that are safe and politically correct?

Many people ask what exactly PROJECT 10 is? I will begin to answer that with telling you what it is not. It isn't a club or a class. It isn't a curriculum. And it isn't a formally structured program that can be quantitatively measured.

PROJECT 10 is a concept. It is a concept that embodies two main ideas: (1) that gay and lesbian students exist, albeit silent and often hidden, and (2) that they have equal rights within the educational system.

What are these rights?

They have a right to attend schools free of verbal and physical harassment, where they can go to learn and not just to survive.

They have a right to attend schools where respect and dignity are standards set by the boards of education and enforced by every principal in every school district in this land.

The right to have access to accurate information about themselves, free of negative judgment, and delivered by trained adults who not only inform them, but affirm them.

They have a right to positive role models, both in person and in the curriculum.

They have the right to be included in support programs that exist to help teenagers find their way to self-acceptance.

They have the right to legislators who guarantee and fight for their constitutional freedoms, rather than one who reinforce hate and bigotry.

Finally, they have a right to a heritage free of crippling self-hate and unchallenged discrimination.

Dignity and worth--that's what it's all about. If we cannot give our children that by the time they leave school, then we would reevaluate why we are in the business of education at all. This is not special treatment, this is equal treatment.

PROJECT 10 in your own school begins with concept and commitment. Once you have that, you can fill in the technicalities, or tailor it to your own school needs. To be effective, it must rise from within. The following methods, not necessarily in this order, worked in developing the model at Fairfax High School in the Los Angeles Unified School District:

(1) A basic awareness of training workshop for teachers, counselors and other support personnel.
(2) The development of educational materials.
(3) The development of parental, community and professional support.
(4) The development of a school team.
(5) The [illegible] formal and informal counseling.
(6) Improvement of the library in both fiction and nonfiction areas.
(7) The development of codes of discipline with regard to verbal and physical assessment.

At the beginning of this speech I said the program did not take money. What does it take? The answer is COURAGE. To be able to say, we support this program because it is right. And you can call me what you want, a pervert or a sinner or a child molester or a recruiter or a promoter or whatever else you can think of, but we support this because we are educators--and public education is for everyone.

Where will we get this courage? THEY will give it to you. The Lou Sheldons and the Jesse Helms and the Bill Dannemeyers will make you fold or THEY will make you strong. THEIR vicious attacks will sharpen you. The hatemongers will make you more resolute. THEY will do it do you. THEY'LL get you so mad you'll see blood.

And just in case you weaken, groups like the Concerned Women of America, the Coalition of Traditional Values, the Focus on the Family, The American Freedom Coalition, and the Eagle Forum or the Heritage Foundation will surface, and THEY will do it for you. THEY will give you COURAGE because they will tap your rage.

And all the time, you will just say to them, "I support PROJECT 10 because I am an educator and public education is for everyone."

I wear a button that says--PROJECT 10, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL.

Thank you for helping to make this a reality.

*Speech delivered by Dr. Virginia Uribe on October 14, 1989at the Lambda Democratic Club 10th Anniversary Dinner, Long Beach, California.

THE PROJECT 10 MODEL

1. A district resource center.

2. A coordinator for the program.

3. On-going workshops to train counselors, teachers and other staff members on issues of institutional homophobia and the special needs of lesbian and gay youth.

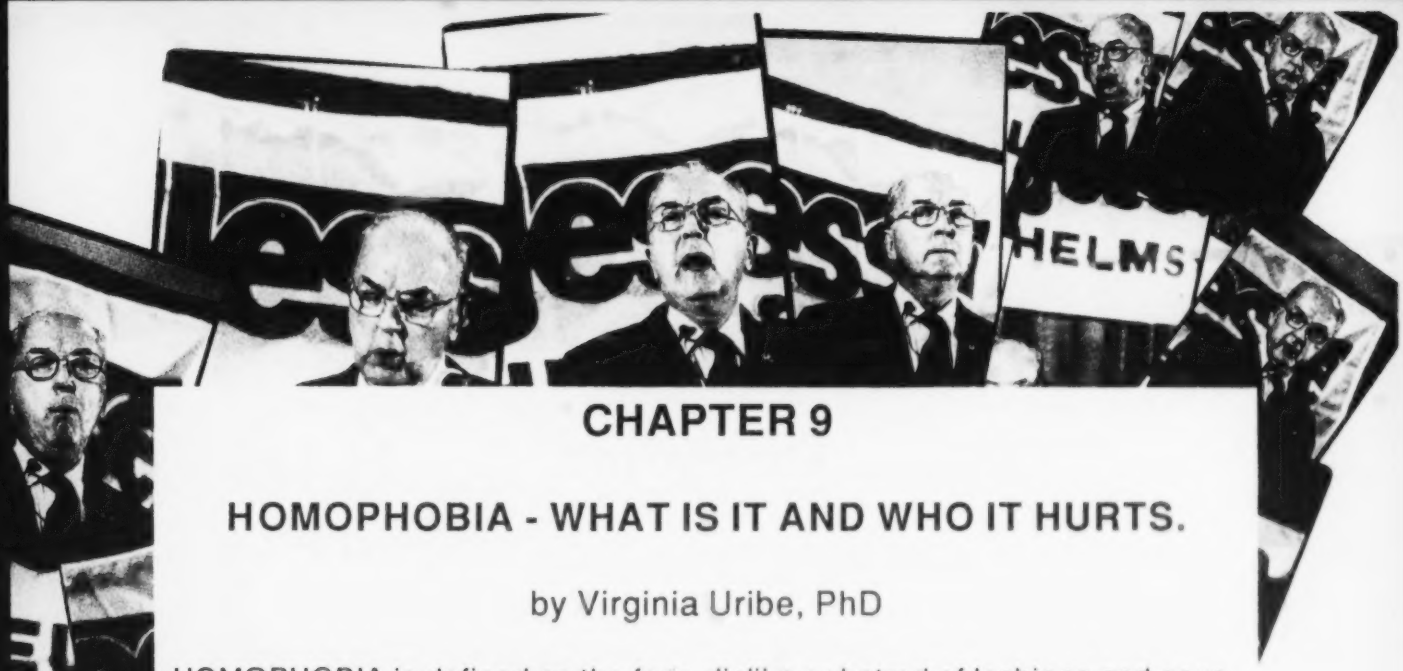
4. Development of trained on-site school teams to whom students can go for information and support.

5. Assistance to librarians in developing fiction and non- fiction materials on gay/lesbian subjects.

6. Enforcement of non-discrimination clauses, anti-slur resolutions, and codes of behavior with regard to name-calling.

7. Advocacy for lesbian and gay student rights through commissions, task forces, PTA's and community outreach programs.

8. Networking with community agencies, parents, educational organizations and teacher's unions.



CHAPTER 9

HOMOPHOBIA - WHAT IS IT AND WHO IT HURTS.

by Virginia Uribe, PhD

HOMOPHOBIA is defined as the fear, dislike or hatred of lesbians and gays, often resulting in acts of prejudice and discrimination. Homophobia does not exist in isolation, and shares many characteristics with other forms of prejudice such as racism and sexism. Because of their sexual orientation, gays and lesbians are denied access to the rights and privileges enjoyed by others, and are therefore sometimes called a "minority" group. Many gays and lesbians are also members of other minority groups, and thus suffer oppression in multiple ways.

Two components make up the phenomenon of HOMOPHOBIA. The first is prejudice for the Latin root "pre-judgment," which is to hold an adverse opinion or belief about a group without just ground or before acquiring sufficient knowledge. When prejudiced feelings of beliefs move into the realm of behavior, the result is discrimination. Discrimination denies to individuals or to groups of people equality of treatment, in this case on the basis of sexual orientation.

Often major social institutions -- laws, customs, religion, education, and so forth -- work to reinforce existing prejudice and discrimination. This is said to constitute institutional discrimination.

Homophobia manifests itself in three ways: OVERT HOMOPHOBIA, INSTITUTIONAL HOMOPHOBIA, AND SOCIETAL HOMOPHOBIA.

OVERT HOMOPHOBIA includes violence, verbal abuse, use of defamatory words, name-calling and character assassination. Direct violence against homosexuals is a nationwide phenomenon. Studies by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force done in 1988 showed that over 90 percent of the respondents experienced some form of victimization on account of sexual orientation -- greater than one out of three have been threatened directly with violence.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INSTITUTIONAL HOMOPHOBIA. Major institutions such as government, schools, businesses, and religion create all sorts of policies which dictate codes of behavior and reinforce attitudes and values. Institutions have tremendous power and social status, and, through penalties and rewards, disapproval and approval, create incentives for conformity to those norms. Few contemporary institutions have policies supportive of homosexuals, and many actively work against gays. In fact, homosexuals are adversely affected by existing social, business, and religious institutions.

Examples of institutional homophobia include the invalidation of personal unions, illegality of same-sex activity in many states, exclusion from job protections which regulate fair employment practices, housing discrimination, rights of child custody, immigration, inheritance, security clearances, public accommodations, and police protection. Many state and private child welfare agencies have stated or implied policies denying same-sex couples or individuals the right to adopt or serve as foster parents, and gay fathers and lesbian mothers have repeatedly lost custody of their children in the courts primarily because of their sexual orientation.

The military effectively discriminates against gays and lesbians by barring them from enlisting in the service. Organized religious institutions exclude admitted homosexuals, often branding them as "sinners," "deviants," "abominations."

Legal sanctions directed against gays and lesbians are increasingly being acknowledged as visible and clear indications of homophobic actions. Less obvious and more difficult to change are the many social codes of behavior which, though not written into law, nonetheless work within a society to legitimize oppression.

SOCIETAL HOMOPHOBIA. Invisibility and denial of existence of homosexuals by the media are the most effective ways of invalidating gays and lesbians in society. Newsworthy events are not covered by the press, legitimate research in areas such as teen suicide is suppressed, positive role models are seldom portrayed, and gays and lesbians are encouraged to keep their lives secret. The use of derogatory labels by TV personalities and politicians is tolerated, if not encouraged, and the struggle for equality by gays and lesbians is often trivialized as excessive or overindulgent.

Internalized homophobia manifests itself in many ways among homosexuals themselves. Denial of one's sexual orientation, contempt for "open" and "obvious" members of the community, distrust of other gay people, projection of prejudice onto another minority group, attempts to "pass" as heterosexual, sometimes even dating or marrying someone of the opposite sex in order to gain approval, increased fear and withdrawal from friends and relatives, and in some instances suicide are but some examples of the destructive force of internalized self-hatred.

HOMOPHOBIA HURTS EVERYONE

EDUCATION

HOMOPHOBIA manifests itself in many ways in our educational system. Overt homophobia is always present in the form of queer jokes, AIDS jokes, snide remarks, gay bashings and other forms of hate incidents. This type of overt prejudice is not only perpetrated by the students, but by adults too -- often, the adults participate in name-calling, innuendos or insults.

> Frank, age 16: "I quit the football team because I couldn't stand the coach calling everyone a fairy, faggot or woman if you didn't measure up in practice....."

INSTITUTIONAL HOMOPHOBIA is measured by the degree of invisibility surrounding the topic of homosexuality or the existence of homosexual youth. Counseling services are not provided, no acknowledgement of gays and lesbians in curriculum or anywhere else is made, and positive role models are few and far between. There is a pervasive fear of addressing the topic of homosexuality in an honest, straightforward manner, and a general reluctance on the part of teachers to bring in up. For young homosexuals, school is a lonely and often frightening place to be. Deprived of support, fearful of being open because of ridicule from teachers and harassment from fellow students, many of them choose drugs, dangerous sexual contacts and even suicide.

Of all the people in education, the greatest responsibility, and therefore the greatest blame, rests with administrators. As a group, they have shown an appalling lack of leadership in securing equity for homosexual youth, or in providing a safe work environment for gay and lesbian teachers. Comments such as "We don't have any gay and lesbian youngsters in our school," or "our community isn't ready for this," or "we've got enough problems without having to deal with perverts too" are often heard by the very persons who are entrusted with providing leadership in our schools.

And what about the non-gay population? They are hurt too by the destructive forces of homophobia. Deprived of knowledge of diverse groups and forced to rely on negative stereotypes, homophobia fosters even more hate and bigotry. This self- perpetrating cycle can only be broken by confronting homophobia in ourselves and others.

THE ONLY WAY TO GET RID OF HOMOPHOBIA IS TO CONFRONT IT.

CHAPTER 10

LESSONS

READ AROUND LESSON

TOPIC: INSTITUTIONAL HOMOPHOBIA

METHOD: GROUP WORK AND GENERAL DISCUSSION

DIVIDE CLASS INTO GROUPS OF SIX, EACH GROUP HAVING ABOUT THE SAME NUMBER OF MEN AND WOMEN.

1. GIVE EACH GROUP A CARD WITH A TITLE FROM A NEWS ARTICLE. HERE SOME SUGGESTIONS.

   a. Lesbian mother loses custody of child. LA Times 4-14-88
   b. Openly gay seminarians pose dilemma for Lutheran officials. LA Times 4-3-89
   c. Same-sex couples denied right to adopt children. Boston Globe May 24, 1985
   d. Organization argues against same-sex marriage. NY Times 5-15-89
   e. Hospital policy says only blood-relatives or spouses permitted visitation rights in hospital, longtime lover denied access. LA Times 7-8-88
   f. University students ask for removal of ROTC program because of military's discrimination against gays and lesbians. LA Times 4-3-89
   g. Vatican states that gay and lesbian groups cannot hold meetings on church property. LA Herald Examiner 4-4-86
   h. Ex-officer sues Los Angeles Police Department. Says LAPD discriminates against gays and lesbians in hiring. LA Times 4-28-89
   i. Gay FBI agent sues over dismissal, loss of security clearance and loss of pension. 6-9-90
   j. Suit against Boy Scouts of America continues: Curran charges his dismissal as scoutmaster was discriminatory. Agency says "being a scoutleader and being a homosexual are not compatible." LA Times 9-14-90

2. HAVE EACH GROUP PREPARE A PRO AND CON ARGUMENT FOR THE POSITION. GIVE THEM 15 MINUTES.

3. HAVE ONE PERSON FROM EACH GROUP PRESENT ARGUMENTS TO THE CLASS.

4. ANALYZE ARGUMENTS. ARE THEY LOGICAL? ARE THEY BASED ON FACTS OR ON EMOTIONS? DO THEY STEREOTYPE GAYS AND LESBIANS? DO THEY GENERALIZE? ARE THE ARGUMENTS PREJUDICIAL OR DISCRIMINATORY?

5. CAN THE CLASS THINK OF OTHER EXAMPLES OF HOMOPHOBIA THAT THEY HAVE ENCOUNTERED PERSONALLY OR INSTITUTIONALLY?

BRAINSTORMING HOMOSEXUALITY AND OTHER SEX EDUCATION TOPICS

Lesson by Gail Rolf, High School Health Teacher, LAUSD

Target Population: Secondary level, grades 9-12--College
Class: Health Education, Psychology, Social Issues, Social Studies
Unit: Family Life Education, Sex Education
Time Required: 90 minutes or 2 class periods
Materials Required: Chalkboard, notebook paper, watch or clock, and masking tape

Objectives: 1) *Students will identify and discuss topics related to sex education.*
2) *Sexuality, including heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality will be defined.*
3) *Students will identify inaccurate information and the sources of such information through class discussion.*
4) *Students will examine positive and negative attitudes regarding human sexuality.*

Introduction:

Near the beginning of the unit on Family Life and Sex Education, students often have many questions about sex and homosexuality. This lesson provides an opportunity for students to raise these questions. At the same time, the instructor can focus on those areas that are of concern to students and give clear and accurate information about human sexuality.

Lesson:

1. Put the word "SEX" on the chalkboard and ask the students to say whatever word(s) come to their mind. Write the words on the chalkboard around the word, "SEX." Explain that the word, "Sex," has many meanings to different people as can be witnessed by the words on the board.

2. Tell the students that they are going to brainstorm sex topics that are of interest to them. Ask them to suggest topics and write them on the board. As they are given, assign one to each student to write on his/her paper. Homosexuality is usually mentioned, but if it is not, the instructor should suggest it along with other ideas. Assign each student one of the topics listed to write on the top of their paper.

3. Instruct students to write a 30 second "brainstorm" for their topic when the command, "go" is given. They do not sign their names to the statements. At the end of 30 seconds, students will rotate seats in a clockwise direction, leaving the papers at their desks. The class is finished when all students have written on all topics and are back in their original seats. (30 minutes)

4. With remaining time, discuss student reactions to this part of the lesson. (i.e., "What did you think of this activity?" " What did you like about the lesson?")

5. Instructor collects papers from all classes and alphabetizes them according to topics and tapes them on the classroom walls. Allow students to read the papers, noting any shocking or embarrassing statements, and statements that are in line with their own thinking. (20 minutes)

6. When students regroup, discuss what they found to be shocking or embarrassing. Ask them the reason they think their peers wrote what they did.

7. Instructor discusses the positive and derogatory statements about homosexuality. Ask students questions such as, "Where do we learn our information about homosexuality?" "Why are such terrible things said about homosexuals?" "What are people afraid of?"

8. With the assistance of the instructor, students define "sexuality." Next, students identify the various types of human sexuality ("heterosexuality," "homosexuality" and "bisexuality).

This lesson was actually taught with great success. Students felt safe writing what they REALLY thought. Class discussion that followed addressed derogatory language used to describe girls, sex organs, and lesbians and gays. They explored attitudes based on misinformation about topics such as rape, divorce, and homosexualtiy. The instructor had an opportunity to give accurate information about those issues and to define human sexuality, including homosexuality. Students learned that homosexuals deserve respect and should be allowed to be who they are without being stigmatized.

NAME CALLING IN THE CLASSROOM

WE **CAN** DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

BY VIRGINIA URIBE, Ph.D.

Every day we hear names echo down the corridors of our schools and explode in our classrooms. Maybe it's happened to us, maybe it hasn't. But we certainly can sense the pain and humiliation of the children, and sometimes we can see their anger.

Insults take many forms; they all hurt. Racial, ethnic and sexual slurs are particularly abusive because they reflect a history of oppression, and therefore there is more power to inflict damage with such slurs. Do children need to be reminded that they are members of a denigrated class?

Sometimes slurs don't even get recognized as being hurtful and may be considered socially acceptable. Many young people use terms such as **nigger, spic, faggot, lezzie, queer** . . . because they know the effectiveness of their hurtful nature. The use of slurs attacks another's self-esteem and teaches young people that hatred of one group is condoned by our society.

As educators, it falls on us to create a cooperative learning environment where students are safe to express themselves in all their diversity. It is also the responsibility of educators to teach children that diversity is something to be celebrated rather than ridiculed.

Dr. Virginia Uribe, Fairfax High School, Los Angeles Unified School District, is founder and director of PROJECT 10, a dropout prevention program targeted at lesbian and gay teenagers.

EXERCISE FOR ESTABLISHING CLASSROOM RULES

* Even without a Code of Discipline, name calling can be controlled within the classroom using the following exercise:

1. Have students brainstorm names they have heard called.
2. List all suggestions on the board.
3. Discuss the following categories and categorize names accordingly: racial, ethnic, sexual, or religious bias.
4. Make students aware that all name calling involves prejudice and is equally bad.

* State that none of the listed names is acceptable in your classroom.

* Make it clear that you will not tolerate any form of name calling.

* Explain why and discuss consequences for failure to adhere to this rule.

* You can control behavior in your classroom. If you react immediately to any transgressions, students will feel safe in the classroom.

ESTABLISH A CODE OF DISCIPLINE

* Name calling, which has one basis in poor self-esteem, has the spiral effect of further lowering self-esteem, making it difficult for learning to take place.

* A system-wide Code of Discipline will assist in controlling name calling when this behavior is addressed directly.

* A phrase in one school's Code of Discipline defines the unacceptable behavior: "Willful obscene, abusive or profane language or gestures (including racial, religious, ethnic or sexual slurs)."

* This definition is followed by specific consequences for transgressions.

* With system-wide support and commitment a discipline code is very effective in eliminating name calling not only in the classroom but also in the hallways where it is most prevalent. *

*Taken from **Name Calling**, Equity Institute, Inc. Box 458, Amherst, Mass. 01004

PREPARING YOUR CLASS FOR SPEAKERS ON HOMOSEXUALITY

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will be able to hear and evaluate different points of view.

2. Students will be able to recognize the difference between information based on fact rather than ignorance or stereotype.

3. Students will be able to exchange information about homosexuality in a setting that is non threatening.

TEACHING STRATEGY:

1. STEP ONE - PREPARATION

    a. Obtain any necessary approval forms from parents and administration.

    b. Contact a local organization (or use own resources) to obtain speaker. This may be a human service organization, a parent group or some other local support organization.

    One suggestion would be to have a panel or three persons. one lesbian, one gay male, and one parent of a lebian or gay male. Each could have 10 minutes to speak with a 15-20 minute question and answer period following.

    c. Prior to the speaking day, announce to the students that these speakers will be coming. Share with your students the expectations and rules you have. Explain that the speakers are there to give information, break stereotypes, and so forth, but may feel it is inappropriate or

unnecessary to talk about very personal matters.

d. Ask students to write down any questions they would like to ask the speakers. Review these questions and prepare a short list to give the speaker about the topics to be covered. Written questions can also be solicited during or immediately before the speakers' presentation, collected, and then given to the speakers as part of the question and answer session. This is especially useful for the shyer students.

2. STEP TWO : SPEAKERS

a. Work out the format and presentation with the speakers prior to their arrival.

b. Be specific about what you want covered, and tell the speakers how you have prepared your students.

c. An invitation to speakers to talk about their every day life and goals can be among the most effective teaching methods. Although the students may be aware of gay men and lesbians, and may have members of their family who are homosexual, few have had the opportunity to talk freely with lesbians and gay men in a structured environment.

d. Save as much time as possible for verbal questions from the students. If questions are not forthcoming, perhaps you can draw upon these:

Do their parents know that they are gay or lesbian?
Were they "out" when they were in high school?
What was their high school experience like?
When did they first have feelings that they might be gay or lesbian?
What is the hardest part of being gay?
How do they feel about speaking to a high school class?

APPENDIX #1

SUGGESTIONS FOR A BASIC LIBRARY ON LESBIAN AND GAY ISSUES

FOR PARENTS

PARENTS MATTER	Anne Muller
MY SON ERIC	Mary Borhek
COMING OUT TO PARENTS	Mary Borhek
BEYOND ACCEPTANCE	Griffin/Wirth
NOW THAT YOU KNOW	Fairchild/Howard
DIFFERENT DAUGHTERS	Louise Rafkin

HISTORICAL

PINK TRIANGLE	Richard Plant
SPIRIT AND THE FLESH	Walter Williams
GAY MEN AND WOMEN WHO ENRICHED THE WORLD	Thomas Cowan
LOOKING AT GAY AND LESBIAN LIFE	Blumenfeld/Raymond

RELIGIOUS

LIVING IN SIN	Bishop John Spong
AND GOD LOVES EACH ONE	Anne Thompson Cook
IS THE HOMOSEXUAL MY NEIGHBOR	Scanzoni/Mollenkoff
THE CHURCH AND THE HOMOSEXUAL	J. McNeill
UNCOMMON CALLING	Chris Glazer

AIDS

THE QUILT-STORIES FROM THE NAMES PROJECT	Cindy Ruskin
LYNDA MADERAS TALKS TO TEENS ABOUT AIDS	Lynda Maderas
AIDS: YOU CAN'T CATCH IT HOLDING HANDS	Niki DeSaint Phalle
BORROWED TIME	Paul Monette

YOUTH

RUBYFRUIT JUNGLE	Rita Mae Brown
ANNIE ON MY MIND	Nancy Garden
REFLECTIONS OF A ROCK LOBSTER	Aaron Fricke
MURDER IN THE NIGHTWOOD BAR	Katherine Forrest
CONSENTING ADULT	Laura Hobson
HOW TOWN	Michael Nava
BEST LITTLE BOY IN THE WORLD	John Reid
PATIENCE AND SARAH	Isabel Miller
A BOY'S OWN STORY	Edmund White
THE PERSIAN BOY	Mary Renault
MARTINA	Martina Navratilova
WHEN SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS GAY	Daniel/Susan Cohen

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE
4014 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213) 668-0629

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE
8853 Santa Monica Blvd.
West Hollywood, CA 90069
(213) 969-0629

WALDENBOOKS
778 Beverly Center
8522 Beverly Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90048-3364
(213) 652-6582

(other branches in San Francisco and New York City)

APPENDIX #2

TEACHER'S SELF-EVALUATION OF NON-BIASED BEHAVIOR

DIRECTIONS

1. Rate yourself for each item.

2. Review your ratings, then evaluate your overall performance by marking the continuum.

3. After checking for areas of weakness as indicated by your ratings, state specific goals for becoming more fair; set a specific time limit for yourself for improvement of these goals.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

* These checklists focus on how a staff member's actions and expectations can create a "hidden curriculum" of bias in the school.

* Be aware of how "bias" can be expressed by deleting or omitting any reference or discussion of homosexuality.

* This list is not meant to rate people but to help identify what may be unconscious biased behaviors in dealing with staff and students.

* It is important that these checklists be used as an exercise to create personal growth and awareness and not used in a judgmental way.

* The process of reading and discussing the checklists is considerably more important than any finding they produce.

TEACHER'S BEHAVIOR	**CHECK BELOW:**		
	Always	**Sometimes**	**Never**
1. ATTITUDE. I take the idea of equity for homosexuals seriously; for example, I do not put down gays or lesbians, or joke about their abilities, roles, backgrounds or traits.	_____	_____	_____
2. LANGUAGE: I use non-biased language; in other words, I do not refer to homosexuals as "faggots" "dykes" "queers" "homos" etc.	_____	_____	_____
3. GENERALIZATIONS: I would avoid generalizations that refer to stereotyping; for example, "gay men are not masculine" or "lesbians don't like men."	_____	_____	_____

	Always	Sometimes	Never
4. TYPES OF EXAMPLES: I use examples in my job showing gay men and lesbians of diverse backgrounds with a wide range of diversity and interest.	_____	_____	_____
5. FACTS: I display and use accurate factual knowledge about homosexuals or gay and lesbian issues.	_____	_____	_____
6. SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS: I supplement the inadequate treatment of gays and lesbians by adding information or by discussing the inaccurate portrayal of people's roles.	_____	_____	_____
7. EQUITABLE ATTENTION. I give equitable attention to gays and lesbians; I do not skirt the issue if it is brought up.	_____	_____	_____
8. DISCIPLINE: I address all pejorative name calling towards gays and lesbians immediately and forcefully in my class.	_____	_____	_____
9. DISCIPLINE: I address all pejorative name calling towards gays and lesbians immediately and forcefully outside of my classroom.	_____	_____	_____
10. VALUES: I let students know by my behavior that the subject of "homosexuality" is a subject that can be discussed safely around me.	_____	_____	_____
11. PEER ATTITUDES: I bring to their attention homophobic comments or jokes made by other teachers.	_____	_____	_____

I WOULD RATE MY BEHAVIOR AS FOLLOWS: (Mark the continuum)

☐ BASICALLY FAIR ☐ NEED SOME IMPROVEMENT

☐ NEED IMPROVEMENT ☐ NEED MUCH IMPROVEMENT

Consider how you rated yourself on "Teacher Behavior."

LIST SPECIFIC GOALS FOR INCREASING EQUITABLE BEHAVIOR ON YOUR PART _____

_____

_____

APPENDIX #3

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING HETEROSEXISM AND HOMOPHOBIA IN SCHOOLING

1. Include lesbian and gay issues in your curriculum by discussing these topics when appropriate, as they apply to specific courses.

2. Include gay and lesbian issues in you lesson plans syllabus as possible discussion topics for the class.

3. Include readings which address lesbian and gay issues on required and recommended reading lists.

4. Include gay and lesbian issues on a list of possible and required topics for written assignments or class presentations.

5. Implement lesson plans for managing homophobic name calling.

6. Develop or obtain specific lesson plans regarding homophobia and heterosexism to implement in your classes.

7. Encourage all students to think about, write about and discuss the ways in which homophobia has impacted their lives.

8. Educate yourself about lesbian and gay people who have made significant contributions. Acknowledge their sexual orientation as it relates to their contributions which you are discussing in class (e.g. Jane Adams, James Baldwin, Gertrude Stein, Walt Whitman and many others).

9. Use lesbian or gay people, or parents of gays and lesbians as guest speakers when appropriate.

10. Be familiar with local gay and lesbian resources and curricular materials (social, political organizations, health care agencies, counseling services, youth groups, readings and film materials) and use them in your class.

11. Use non-gender specific language consistently whenever discussions about relationships or partner-choice situations arise (e.g. partner, lover, person).

12. Interrupt anti-gay or lesbian comments by staff and student alike. State that assaultive and or derogatory jokes, behaviors or other actions against anyone because of perceived difference on the basis of sexual orientation is unfair, offensive and harmful.

13. Prominently display pamphlets and resource guides for the lesbian, gay and bi-sexual communities in and around counselors' offices.

14. Encourage comprehensive professional staff development and training regarding heterosexism and homophobia.

APPENDIX #4

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE OPPOSITION

Credit: Les Hammer San Fernando Sun

RULE 1. Be pleasant. Be firm. Stay focused. Don't get sidetracked.

RULE 2. Offer information.

RULE 3. Remember the basic facts about homosexuality.

RULE 4. Remind opponents that we are PUBLIC EDUCATORS, and that our responsibility is to serve ALL children.

RULE 5. That ALL children are deserving of dignity and respect.

RULE 6. That the mission of PUBLIC EDUCATION is to teach children how to live peacefully in an increasingly diverse society.

RULE 7. That personal beliefs MUST be separated from public policy.

WHAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY

1. Nobody knows the cause. There is no single factor.
2. Sexual orientation appears to be established early in life.
3. Attempts to change homosexuals into heterosexuals have been largely unsuccessful.
4. Most homosexuals are unidentifiable by appearance or mannerism.
5. Homosexuality is NOT a mental illness. It was declassified as such by the American Psychiatric Association in 1973.
6. Homosexuals are NOT sick, deviant or perverted.
7. Homosexuals have the same capacity for loving, longlasting relationships and productive lives as do heterosexuals.

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APPENDIX 5

SECTION E
THURSDAY
DECEMBER 7, 1989

VIEW

Los Angeles Times

RICK MEYER / Los Angeles Times

Virginia Uribe, founder of Project 10 at Fairfax High School, stands in front of a wall covered with AIDS obituaries.

Haven for Gay Teens

■ **Education:** Some people call Project 10 a bad idea, but the counseling program gives some homosexual students in L.A. the courage to stay in school.

By MICHAEL QUINTANILLA
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Erik, a high school senior, had just finished working out at a West Hollywood gym when he heard the horrifying news. His former lover had AIDS.

"I thought my heart was going to pop out of my chest when he showed me the purple skin marks on his hands and arms," the 18-year-old Fairfax High student says of the sidewalk encounter with his former boyfriend three weeks ago.

Though Erik (not his real name) has tested negative for the AIDS virus and appears to be in the best of health, he can't concentrate on much else. He has been awakened by terrifying dreams in which he has purple blotches on his own body. He has grown so depressed that he has contemplated suicide.

But he has found some solace in discussing his situation with other Fairfax teenagers, all participants in a precedent-setting, school-sponsored counseling program for homosexual students called Project 10.

For an hour, in a room without windows (to guarantee their privacy), the eight to 12 homosexual young men and women in Project 10 talk about topics such as the consequences of coming out, the importance of safe sex, AIDS, condoms, their parents, friends, feelings and frustrations.

They say Project 10 offers them a haven, a place where they can feel free to be themselves and to deal with their concerns about their sexual orientation, which, they say, often has caused them to be mocked, scorned, beaten, rejected—and worse.

Some of the students have been kicked out of their homes after telling their parents they were gay; some have ended up on Hollywood Boulevard as runaways, hustlers and drug abusers. Many of the students, frightened and isolated, say school is the least of their worries, and they often drop out.

But in Project 10, Los Angeles educators contend they have found a way to keep gay teen-agers in school. The program, officials say, has proved so worthwhile that it was expanded last year from Fairfax High to other schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

While it has won praise from educators and some community leaders, Project 10 has also been condemned by others, including Catholic Archbishop Roger Mahony, who has called the program "a camouflaged method to legitimize homosexuality."

Other critics have accused Project 10, which gets its name from the estimate that 10% of the nation's population is gay, of recruiting teen-agers into a homosexual life style.

Virginia Uribe, a science teacher for 30 years and Project 10's founder, dismisses the attacks. Instead, she says her program—in which she has involved almost 600 counselors, nurses, teachers and school psychologists via workshops she has conducted—is vital to help gay teen-agers survive to adulthood.

Gay young people, Uribe says, sabotage their own lives because they have no one to talk with about their homosexuality. "They have to monitor everything they say, play it straight with friends and parents," and just when they need to talk to someone about their feelings, they "can't turn to anyone."

But in her classroom—Room 308—that's not so.

Instead, there are for the taking, no questions asked, brochures about coping with homosexuality. Uribe has also created an attention-grabbing wall display of AIDS-related obituaries of men, women and children.

"Project 10," she says, "is here to let kids express their feelings. We don't push them to come out."

But the program does try to discourage gay teens from being what she calls "the invisible students on campus," leading "secret double lives—gay on the inside but on the surface faking heterosexuality."

Ironically, it was a 1984 incident involving an openly gay and effeminate male Fairfax student that launched Project 10, Uribe recalls. The student suffered such harassment from other teen-agers that he quit school.

"I kept asking about that student, why he was no longer in school, why he was pushed out—other than the fact that he was gay," Uribe says. "It just so upset

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PROJECT 10: Help for Teen-Agers

me that I thought we ought to put our attentions to this under-served minority of youth in education. Our commitment to equality extends to all children."

Uribe surveyed major school districts in the state and nationwide and found no services provided for homosexual students in public education.

"It was outright bigotry," she says, adding that possibly hundreds, even thousands, of young people may have dropped out of school for that reason.

Soon after, Uribe started "a little informal rap group at lunchtime" for gay and lesbian students, she says. In a month's time, about 25 teen-agers were showing up.

Uribe, who describes herself as a lesbian, spoke to her principal, Warren Steinberg, about starting an official program for gay students. She says, "he was and continues to be extremely supportive," of her work, which includes teaching two science classes in the morning, counseling homosexual students part time and spending afternoons consulting with officials at other schools about Project 10.

Its cost, she notes, "is what the district gives me for [teaching] three periods a day. This program is very low budget but very cost-effective because we are reaching students who never before had someone teach them how to cope with low self-esteem, isolation and violence from verbal and physical abuse."

The Los Angeles Board of Education has strongly backed Project 10, as have more than 20 city and statewide teacher associations and youth groups. Educators who have attended Uribe's workshops on the program also praise it.

Gene Touchet, a Franklin High English teacher, says he and his peers are interested in Project 10's goals of preventing suicide, substance abuse and the spread of AIDS among homosexual teen-agers: "I know students are scared to reveal their gayness to other students or to their parents. So the value of Project 10 at Franklin is that it is there and visible, and whatever a kid needs from it they can take it."

Carolee Bogue, a Fairfax dean who also conducts rap sessions, says gay teen-agers should have the freedom "to search and seek out their own identity. They are kids crying out in crisis. They need the weekly consistency and structure of Project 10, not a little pep talk."

But critics say Uribe and Project 10 are little more than a "recruitment program" for students to be homosexuals.

Republicans in the state Assembly have voted unanimously in the past to withhold taxpayers' money for the Los Angeles Unified School District until it stops supporting Project 10. But Leonard Britton, the district superintendent, and school board members have refused to stop the program.

Project 10's endorsement by the school board infuriates the Rev. Lou Sheldon, whom Uribe calls her staunchest critic.

Sheldon is chairman of the Anaheim-based Traditional Values Coalition, which he claims has the statewide support of 6,500 churches. He also founded SHAPE (Stop Homosexual Advocacy in Public Education) soon after Uribe founded Project 10.

Sheldon and his coalition's members oppose Project 10 because they say "parents are totally left out of the picture unless the student makes the decision" to reveal his or her sexual orientation and involve them.

He also asserts that the program condones homosexuality as an acceptable life style for other students, "because there is no alternative viewpoint.

"Project 10 is clearly a recruitment program," Sheldon says. "It advocates for young people the homosexual life style. This is an absolute one-sided perspective. Why should taxpayers' dollars support only one life style?"

He says studies indicate that 25% of all adolescents experiment with homosexuality, "but that doesn't mean that they are homosexual. It means they need counseling."

He objects, however, to Uribe's approach, because, he says: "Project 10 says you are born this way [a homosexual] and this is the way you are. That's false information. It's not conclusive that [homosexuality] is genetic. Homosexuality is only an underdeveloped stage of heterosexuality."

But Gary Remafedi, a nationally respected pediatrician who has researched gay and lesbian youth issues since 1983, disagrees with Sheldon: "As a physician and a researcher, I can tell you that all research indicates that efforts to change sexual orientation are unsuccessful [and] unethical. My own rule of thumb is 'Don't fix it, if it ain't broke.'"

Remafedi, an assistant professor and medical coordinator for the adolescent health program at the University of Minnesota Hospital and Clinic, cited a 1983 American Academy of Pediatrics position, acknowledging that gay and lesbian teen-agers do exist and that pediatricians have a responsibility to work with them and their families.

"What we understand is that there is no underlying psychiatric abnormality with these teen-agers," he says, adding that the American Psychiatric Assn. removed homosexuality from its list of psychiatric disorders in 1973. "Their problems are a consequence of social stigma and any attempt to change a person's sexual orientation only strengthens the stigma that causes the damage."

By attacking programs such as Project 10, which has become a national model, Remafedi says opponents help to hand down death sentences to teen-agers considering suicide or on the verge of infection with HIV, the human immunodeficiency virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome or AIDS.

"The suicide attempt rate among the gay teens we work with is one out of three," Remafedi says; federal health statistics indicate that gay teen-agers are three times more likely than other young people to commit suicide.

"As a consequence of being gay or lesbian, many teen-agers lose self-esteem and hope for the future," Remafedi explains. "They lose support of family and community and see self-destruction as their only action."

As for AIDS, Remafedi says, "teens who are gay or bisexual are the kids who are most in danger of getting AIDS and less likely to get help." He says 70% of the 1,200 AIDS cases among 13- to 21-year-olds resulted from homosexual or bisexual activity. "Because AIDS is latent for so long," it also poses a special danger to gay young people, many of whom engage in sex as early as their preteen years, when little or no AIDS education is offered, he says.

"People don't want to acknowledge that gay and lesbian youth exist," he says. "The conventional wisdom has been that these kids will grow out of it, that it's just a passing phase or that they must be crazy and are in need of psychiatric help."

That's not true, say Remafedi and others, who argue that gay teen-agers, instead, need help from programs like Project 10.

It has been a lifesaver for Regina, 17, a lesbian student at Fairfax High, who says: "I just want to make it through my teen years."

Six months ago, Regina (not her real name) disclosed to her mother that she was homosexual, "because I couldn't live a lie anymore. I wanted to be up front and truthful and honest about my feelings, but it just made matters worse."

The revelation that she was gay shattered her relationship with her mom, Regina says, adding that her mother, a single parent, responded by all but forcing her to read the Bible after school every day.

Other family problems soon contributed to Regina's moving out of the home and into an apartment with a lesbian friend.

"I've known for a long time that I was gay," she says. "I finally had to come to grips with a lot of things. I had to find out why I didn't like men . . . why I've always been the way I am."

Regina says that since she joined Project 10's discussions about six months ago, she feels less "invisible and alone."

She has told many of her heterosexual friends that she is a lesbian. A few have stopped befriending her, but she tries not to let that bother her. "I told them because we *were* friends," she emphasizes. "I told them because I finally am proud about who and what I am. If I can accept them as my friends, why can't they accept me?"

She says she wants her friends and the heterosexual world to know that "I am not a child molester, I am not sex crazy and that I do not look at other girls *that* way when we dress in the locker room."

Still, Regina says what matters most right now is her well-being, especially since she left home.

Like Erik, she is struggling to stay in school.

Says Erik, while sitting in Room 308: "I wish there was a place like this room in all the schools to make it easier for other kids. I know now there is someone to talk to."

He says that before he was in Project 10, he figured he was the only youngster in middle school who was gay. He didn't know how to deal with his feelings, and he didn't know anyone else who had similar feelings. He didn't know where to turn.

In high school, he disguised his sexual orientation by pretending to be heterosexual and by dating girls. Now, his closest female friends know he is gay and cover for him by being his date at school dances.

He wanted to drop out and for a time smoked large amounts of marijuana to hide his problems. Until a year ago, he went through a period of sexual promiscuity, often spending weekends away from home with men he met at gay bars.

He says he wants to talk to his mother about his homosexuality, but there are too many other family problems to deal with, including his teen-age sister's pregnancy.

But at least for now, Erik can find some understanding for his problems at Project 10 and especially from Uribe, who "didn't think I was crazy or weird.

"She saved me from suicide," Erik says.

But Uribe says Erik saved himself by joining the program. "I hope that's why we are here—not only to keep kids in the classroom, but to keep them alive and claiming their right to be who they are."

FRIENDS OF PROJECT 10, INC.

FRIENDS OF PROJECT 10, INC., is a tax-exempt educational organization established in 1986 to assist schools and school districts in setting up counseling programs modeled after the PROJECT 10 program in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Included in the mission of the organization is the distribution of non-judgmental materials which provide accurate information about human sexuality and which stress personal responsibility and risk-reduction behavior. FRIENDS OF PROJECT 10, INC., works with parents, community members, teachers, school administrations, elected officials and other professionals. Inquiries regarding educational materials, United Way designation, scholarships and memorial bequests, should be addressed to FRIENDS OF PROJECT 10, INC. ID# 95-4080446.

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Dan is Gay.
So they crippled him for life.

PHOTO Valerie Snyder

Six years ago in San Antonio, Texas, Dan Guiling was attacked by a pair of gay-hating young men. They stabbed him and left him for dead. He has a severed spinal cord and is paralyzed for life.

Dan is just one of thousands of gay men and lesbians who fall victim to hate crimes each year. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force catalogued a record 7,248 incidents nationally during 1988 ranging from harassment to homicide.

Education is the only lasting weapon against bigotry. Don't let this happen to someone you love. We are fighting ignorance and baseball bats with hearts and minds.

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